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THE CAR OF TIME

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

(Translated)

A Drama in one Act.

[*The curtain rises on a group of Citizens standing on the roadside, looking towards the Car, which however is not visible to the audience.*]

1st Citizen.

Father Time's Car-festival has come round, but his Car is at a standstill. It simply refuses to stir. I know whose fault it is, for the Soothsayer has told us.

2nd Citizen.

It may not be anybody's fault at all. Perhaps old Father Time is tired, and wants a rest.

1st Citizen.

Nonsense! How shall we get along, if Time refuses to move on? Just look at that rope, lying there. What an age-long rope! What a number of people have put their hands to it! But never before has it lain thus in the dust.

3rd Citizen.

If the Car doesn't move, and the rope lies limp, it will prove a halter round the neck of the whole kingdom.

2nd Citizen.

Lord! How fearsome it looks, as if about to writhe and rear its head like a snake!

3rd Citizen.

Oh, look! look! It actually seems to be moving!

1st Citizen.

If we can't make it go, and it takes its own course, there'll be trouble I can tell you!

3rd Citizen.

It will mean the loosening of all the bonds of the world. Then the Car will knock us down and roll over our bodies. It's because we help to drag it along that we don't fall under its wheels. What's to be done now?

1st Citizen.

There's the Priest sitting and chanting his *mantrams*.

2nd Citizen.

His chanting won't make the Car go on. In the old days the Priest had to give the first pull. Does he think his *mantrams* will now do the work instead?

1st Citizen.

The pulling has already been tried, friend. From early dawn, while it was yet dark, the Priests got here, before everybody else, and tugged and hauled for all they were worth. It was only when the morning light came, and people began to arrive, that they left the ropes and sat apart, with eyes closed, to do their chanting. Do you think they have any strength left in this *Kali-yuga*?

3rd Citizen.

Good gracious! The rope seems to be throbbing,—as if it was the artery of the ages.

1st Citizen.

It seems to me the Car can only be started by the touch of some great and holy man.

2nd Citizen.

If we have to wait for some great and holy man, the auspicious time will be over. Meanwhile what's going to happen to us ordinary sinful people?

3rd Citizen.

Providence doesn't bother its head about what may, or may not happen to sinful people!

2nd Citizen.

What! D'you think the world was made for holy men? Where would we have been then? No, no, Creation was meant for us ordinary folk. Holy men drop in accidentally, now and then, and do not stay long either. They cannot bear the brunt of us, and have to fly to the shelter of caves and forests.

1st Citizen.

Well, old man, why not try a hand at the rope yourself, and let us see whether the Car moves, or the rope breaks, or you come down bang on your nose!

2nd Citizen.

The difference between holy men and us is that they are only one or two and we are many. If the lot of us could but screw ourselves up to join hands and give a manly pull, all together, the Car would run fast enough. We can't draw it because we can't, or won't come together, and keep staring into vacancy for some extraordinary man to turn up.

3rd Citizen.

My goodness! Was that the rope wriggling? Do be careful what you fellows say!

1st Citizen.

In the scriptures it is written that, at the first sacred moment of day-break, the first pull is for the Priest. And, in the second watch, the second pull is for the King. Both have failed to-day. Now, on whom falls the third pull?

[*Enter Soldiers.*]

1st Soldier.

What a shame! What a shame! The King himself put his hand to the rope, and we in our thousands joined in the tugging, but never a squeak did we get out of the wheels.

2nd Soldier.

We are Kshatriyas, my dear fellow, not cattle like the Sudras. Our business is to ride the Car, not to drag it.

3rd Soldier.

Or, perhaps, to break the Car! My hands are itching to lay hold of an axe and smash it up. I should like to see how old Father Time is going to prevent me.

1st Citizen.

The kind of arms you bear, my gallant friend, will neither serve to move nor break the Car. You haven't heard what the Soothsayer has said, have you?

1st Soldier.

What did he say?

1st Citizen.

It's a case of the *Treta-yuga* story over again.

1st Soldier.

Wasn't it in the *Treta-yuga* that the monkeys set Lanka on fire?

1st Citizen.

No, no, not that one.

2nd Soldier.

Is it then Rama's killing of the monkey King that you mean?

1st Citizen.

Now you're nearer. Don't you remember how the Sudra went in for austere discipline to gain spiritual merit? Good old

Father Time was furious and could only be pacified after Rama had cut off the presumptuous Sudra's head.

3rd Soldier.

There's no fear of that now. Even the Brahmins have given up all discipline, why talk about Sudras?

1st Citizen.

Some of our Sudras, here, have taken to reading the scriptures in secret. "Are we not men?" they fling out, if they are discovered. It must be the Evil Spirit of this godless age who has gone about putting it into their heads that they're men. Father Time is wise in not letting his Car stir. If once it starts, it will grind earth, moon and sun underneath its wheels. Just fancy!—the Sudra throwing out his chest and proclaiming he's a man! What next, I wonder?

1st Soldier.

To-day the Sudra reads scripture, to-morrow the Brahmin takes to the plough, and then follows red ruin!

2nd Soldier.

Then come along, let's go over to the Sudra quarters and get busy with our arms. We'll soon show them who are the better men!

3rd Soldier.

Some one has gone and told the King that in this *Kali-Yuga* neither arms nor scriptures, but only gold pieces can act as prime movers. So the King has sent for Dhanapati, the Merchant. They've all come to believe that but for his pull the Car won't budge.

1st Soldier.

If the Car starts at the pulling of a Bania, we had better tie our weapons round our necks and go and drown ourselves!

2nd Soldier.

What's the good of getting excited? The Bania has the pull everywhere now-a-days, even Cupid's bow-string twangs to his touch.

3rd Soldier.

That's true enough. The King only shows himself in front : behind him is the Bania all the time.

1st Soldier.

Well, let the Bania remain behind. We are ranged on either side of the King, so the pæans are all sung to us.

3rd Soldier.

May be, but it's the man at the back who calls the tune.

[*Enter Minister & Dhanapati.*]

1st Soldier.

Who the deuce are these?

2nd Soldier.

The flashes jump off their diamonds, like so many crickets, right into our eyes.

3rd Soldier.

Look at those huge gold chains round their necks,—regular fetters! Who on earth are they?

1st Citizen.

They are Dhanapati, the Merchant's men. They have got Father Time tied up hand and foot with those gold chains of theirs. That's why his Car can't move.

1st Soldier.

(*To the retainers*) : What brings you here?

1st Retainer.

The King has sent for our Master, Dhanapati. None of the others have been able to move the Car, so they're all hoping he'll do it.

2nd Soldier.

Who are "they all" and what business have they to be so "hoping"?

2nd Retainer.

Doesn't everything that moves now-a-days, move under our Master's hands?

2nd Soldier.

I'll show you just now that the sword does not move in his hands, but in ours!

3rd Retainer.

And who moves your hands, eh? As if you never heard about that!

1st Soldier.

Be quiet, you unmannerly boor!

2nd Retainer.

Quiet indeed! D'you know that it's our voice which resounds to-day throughout earth, water and sky.

1st Soldier.

Your voice? When our hundred-mouthed weapon thunders—

2nd Retainer.

It's *our* behest which that thunder carries from market to market!

1st Citizen.

What's the good of quarrelling with these people? You'll never get the better of them.

1st Soldier.

What! How do you mean?

1st Citizen.

No sooner you draw your swords from their scabbards, you'll find some have eaten of their salt and others have tasted of their bribes.

1st Retainer.

We were told they had brought up the wonderful old ascetic,

who lives by the Narmada, to try his hand on the Car. Does anybody know what happened?

2nd Retainer.

I do. When they reached his cave they found him on the flat of his back, in a trance, with his legs locked in the lotus posture. They pushed and pulled him into his senses, but his legs had gone stiff, he couldn't rise to the occasion!

3rd Retainer.

Small blame to his legs, after being locked for sixty-five years! But what did he say?

2nd Retainer.

Nothing doing there, either! Lest his tongue should sin he had taken the precaution of cutting it off. He could only keep on groaning, and each one gave each groan his own meaning.

1st Retainer.

And then?

2nd Retainer.

Then they lifted him up and brought him along, but hardly had he touched the rope when the wheels began to sink into the ground!

3rd Retainer.

Ha, ha! Like his own mind he fain would drag Time's Car into the depths.

1st Retainer.

No, it must have been the burden of his sixty-five years' fasting that was too much for the wheels. Why, our legs refuse their office even after a single day of it!

3rd Citizen.

Talking of burdens, the burden of you people's pride seems heavy enough!

2nd Citizen.

That's a burden which crushes itself.

To retainers: You wait and see what a fall your Dhanapati's pride is going to have to-day.

1st Retainer.

All right, we'll see. Who furnishes Father Time's rations I should like to ask? If they're stopped, it'll be all one whether the Car halts or runs. 'Tis the full belly makes the world go round!

[*Enter Minister & Dhanapati.*]

Dhanapati.

Well, Sir Minister, why am I summoned?

Minister.

Whenever the Kingdom's in any kind of want, aren't you the first to be called upon to remove it?

Dhanapati.

If it's a question of supply, I'm always ready—but what about the present trouble?

Minister.

You must have heard that the Car has failed to respond to any other pull?

Dhanapati.

I have indeed; but, Sir Minister, this is a matter which has all along been in charge of—

Minister.

I know, the Priests have so far been in charge. But in the old days they used to achieve their own progress by dint of hard striving, and then they could make things progress too. Now they are all sitting tight at your door,—immoveable themselves and unable to move others.

Dhanapati.

There were also the King and his ministers and his warriors, —they all used to take their turn at the ropes. So everything went smoothly and all we had to do was to oil the wheels. This is the first time I'm asked to do any hauling.

Minister.

Look here, Master Merchant, this moving of the Car is a test for all of us. The turning of its wheels will show who really leads the world. When the Priest was leader, and then the King was leader, the Car used to bound forward at their very touch, like a lion roused from sleep. Now they don't get the least response. That only shows how pen and sword alike have become bankrupt—all command has gone over into your hands. Those are the hands that must now man the ropes.

Dhanapati.

Well, let my men try first. If they manage to get so much as a quiver out of the Car, I'll join them. But it would never do to expose myself, before all these people, to the discredit—

Minister.

Ask them to hurry up then, Master Merchant. The whole kingdom awaits you, fasting; for all refreshment is forbidden till the Car arrives at the Temple. Besides, what if you try, and don't succeed,—where's the discredit? That's no more than has befallen both Priest and King.

Dhanapati.

They are at the top, my dear Sir, while we are only at the bottom of everything. So they will be judged in one way, and we in another. If the car fails to move I'm disgraced; if it does move I may be undone, for then none will tolerate my good luck. Each one of you will then begin to think how to bring about its curtailment.

Minister.

All you say may be very true,—but what's to be done? The Car must be got to move. If you hesitate much longer, we shall have the populace up against us.

Dhanapati.

All right, let's have a try. If fortune favours and gives me success, let not that be held against me.

(*To his men*): Now, my men, let's have hearty cheers for *Siddhi.**

Retainers.

Jai Siddhi! *Jai Siddhi*!

Dhanapati.

Siddhi, our Goddess!

Retainers.

Jai Siddhi, our Goddess!

Dhanapati.

Oh, I say! I can't even lift the rope, let alone pulling it. It's as heavy as the Car itself. This is no ordinary man's task.

(*To his men*): Come on, all of you; take hold, every one. Where's my Cashier? Come along, Cashier. Now once more, *Jai Siddhi,* heave ho! *Jai Siddhi,* all together! *Jai Siddhi,* pull away, my hearties!

No. It's no use. The rope gets stiffer and stiffer at every tug.

All.

Fie! Fie! Shame! Shame!

1st Soldier.

Saved! Our honour's saved!

Dhanapati.

I salute you, Father Time! You are truly on our side, for that you have kept still. Had you begun to move at our hands you would have ended by riding over our breasts, levelling us to the dust.

Cashier.

Alas, Master, our prestige, which of late was steadily in the ascendant, is grievously lowered to-day.

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* Success.

Dhanapati.

Look here! We've been making headway all this time, under the shade of the moving Car, unobserved by the multitude. Now that we are right in front of it, we have become dangerously obvious—I hear the grinding of teeth here and there, only too clearly. Once it becomes too patent that we are working the Car, that will mean the end of us.

1st Soldier.

(*To Dhanapati*). In the old days this failure would have meant the loss of your head!

Dhanapati.

In other words, your hands would have found something to do;—how fallow they lie without heads to chop off!

1st Soldier.

If Father Time himself, to say nothing of the King, hadn't become your very humble servant, I'd have known how to give a fitting reply!

Dhanapati.

To tell you the truth, we were safer when our person wasn't so very sacred. This humble service only leads us to our death.

Why so downcast, Sir Minister?

Minister.

Now that we've played our last move, I'm worried to think that there's nothing left to try.

Dhanapati.

Don't be anxious. Now that you've come to the end of your devices, Father Time himself will devise his own means. After all, it's to his interest to move on—not ours. When his call rings forth, his proper steeds will come running up. Those who are behind the scenes to-day will then come to the forefront. Meanwhile let me go and put my Counting-house in order.

Come on, Cashier, let's double-lock the strong-room to begin with. There's no time to lose.

[*Exeunt Dhanapati and his retainers.—Enter Spy.*]

Spy.

Sir Minister, there's a great turmoil on at the Sudra quarters.

Minister.

What's the trouble?

Spy.

A crowd of them are marching up. "*We'll* move Father Time's Car!" say they.

All.

What! Who's going to let them touch the ropes?

Spy.

Who's going to prevent them, rather!

Soldiers.

No fear! We'll stand guard.

Spy.

How many are you after all? You may blunt your swords cutting them down, but there'll be so many left that you wont even get standing room near the car.

(*To the Minister*): You seem all of a tremble, Sir.

Minister.

It's not anything they may do to us that I dread.

Spy.

Then?

Minister.

I am afraid they'll succeed!

Soldiers.

What are you saying, Sir Minister? *They* pull the Car of Time! Shall the stone float?

Minister.

But, don't you see, if they can, it will show that a new dispensation of Providence has been ushered in? If the ground floor takes the place of the top floor, doesn't that portend a cataclysm? What's the most terrible earthquake?—only the same thing happening underground. A change of Cycle is but the coming into light of that which was hidden.

Soldiers.

What would you have us do? Command us! We fear nothing on earth.

Minister.

This love of parading fearlessness creates our most fearful problems. No barrier of swords, however desperate, will avail to check the flood of Time.

Spy.

Then what is your advice, Sir?

Minister.

The best course is not to put any obstacle in their way. Obstacles teach Power to recognise itself. And once you allow unconscious Power to know where it is, we are nowhere!

Soldiers.

Then are we to stand by and let them come?

Spy.

They're already here!

Minister.

Don't do a thing. Keep quite still.

[*Enter crowd of Sudras.*]

Minister.

(*To their leader*): Hullo, Sardar! Glad to see you all.

Sudra Leader.

We've come to drive Time's Car, Sir Minister.

Minister.

That's what you've always been doing. We were there only for form's sake. Don't I know that?

Sudra Leader.

All this time we've been offering ourselves up under the wheels of the Car, and its progress has been over our mangled bodies. This time Father Time refused to accept our sacrifice.

Minister.

So I could see. There were scores of you grovelling in the dust before the Car this morning, but the wheels had apparently lost their appetite, for they did not advance on their victims, with shrieks of joy, as usual. Their ominous silence is what dismays us.

Sudra Leader.

Father Time has not called us to-day for paving the road under the wheels, but to pull the ropes of his Car.

Priest.

Indeed! And how came you to know this, pray?

Sudra Leader.

No one knows how these things are known. From early this morning the whisper has gone round that Father Time calls us,—old and young,—man, woman and child.

A Soldier.

Calls you for your blood!

Sudra Leader.

No, for taking charge of the pulling.

Priest.

Look here, my son, just consider. Shouldn't the ropes of Time's Car be placed in charge only of those who can move the world?

Sudra Leader.

Does Your Reverence really think that it is you who move the world?

Priest.

The times are awry, I admit. But, after all's said and done, aren't we Brahmins still?

Sudra Leader.

(*To the Minister*): Then, Honorable Sir, is it you who claim to move the world?

Minister.

What is the world, but you yourselves? You move of your own motion, while we, the clever men, pretend that we are moving you. Apart from all of you, how miserably few of us remain?

Sudra Leader.

Whatever may be your number, can you remain at all, apart from us?—that's the point.

Minister.

That's so, that's so.

Sudra Leader.

You nourish your bodies on the food we produce, and maintain your status on the clothes we weave.

A Soldier.

What impertinence? Up to now they've been crying with folded hands: "O Masters, you feed and clothe us." They've got hold of a new tag this time. We really can't allow this sort of thing.

Minister.

(*To the soldiers*): Do keep quiet!

(*To the Sudra Leader*): Exactly so, Sardar, we were only waiting for you. Are we such fools as not to know that you alone are the proper steeds of Time. Go on, do your part, and then we'll get the chance of doing ours.

Sudra Leader.

Come along, brothers, set to work with a will. Whether we live or die for it, we'll get a move on this Car.

Minister.

But, my dear Sardar, be careful to stick to the road,—the highroad along which the Car has always travelled. Don't you come lumbering right on to us.

Sudra Leader.

We are only steeds, what do we know about right or wrong road? The Driver will see to that. Come along, all of you. Don't you see how the pennant over the Car top flutters? That's the signal given by Father Time himself. Come on, haul away.

Priest.

Ah, they've touched it, they've actually touched it! What desecration!

Citizens.

Oh! Oh! What abomination!

Priest.

Close your eyes, my children, close your eyes. If your gaze falls on Father Time when he bursts on them in the full blaze of his wrath, you'll be reduced to ashes.

A Soldier.

What's that?—the rumble of wheels?—or does the very sky groan in despair?

Priest.

It cannot be!

A citizen.

Yes, indeed, it seems to move.

Soldiers.

There! Dust rises! A crime, a most horrible crime! The Car moves! O sin, thrice accursed sin!

Sudras.

Victory! Victory! Victory to Father Time!

Priest.

Ah, woe is me! It has actually happened.

Soldiers.

Give us the word of command, Reverend Sir, and let us fall upon that rabble, with all our weapons, to stop their sacrilegious progress.

Priest.

I dare not. If Father Time himself doesn't mind losing caste, no command of ours will make him do penance.

Soldiers.

Then let us throw away our useless arms!

Priest.

I, too, will throw away my scriptures.

Citizens.

Let's clear out of this kingdom. What will you do, Sir Minister? Where are you off to?

Minister.

I go to join them at the ropes.

Citizens.

You! To mingle with *them*?

Minister.

Then only will Father Time be propitiated. Isn't it clear enough that it's they who have now gained his favour? What has happened is no dream, no illusion. Our place of honour to-day is at their side—else shall we be dishonoured indeed.

Soldiers.

But still, for you to take hold of the rope contaminated by their touch—that surely was never the design of Providence. Check them we must! We go to call out all our forces. If the Car cannot be stopped, it shall roll through a mire of blood.

Priest.

I'll go with you too. I may be of use as your counsellor.

Minister.

You'll never check them. It's your turn, I see, to go under, this time.

Soldiers.

So be it. Too long has base-born blood polluted the wheels of Father Time's Car. Let it now be cleansed with ours.

Priest.

Oh look, do look Sir Minister. The Car leaves the King's highway and runs down into the fields. The Lord knows what unfortunate village it may charge into!

Soldiers.

What are Dhanapati's men shouting over there? They seem to be calling on us for help. The Car looks like heading straight for the Counting-house. To the rescue! To the rescue!

Minister.

Save yourselves first, my good fellows, and then talk of rescuing others. I rather think it's your Armoury that the Car makes for. There'll be nothing left of it, if that be so. Look there!

Soldiers.

What's to be done?

Minister.

Man the ropes along with the pullers. That's the only way to guide the car to safety. This is no time to dilly-dally. I'm off. [*Exit.*]

Soldiers.

(*To one another*): What shall we do?

(*To the Priest*): Reverend Sir, what is your idea?

Priest.

What have you decided, my braves?

Soldiers.

Fight or pull?—We don't know which, confound it! Do tell us, Sir, what *you* propose.

Priest.

Rush to the ropes, or sit at the scriptures?—I'm afraid I don't know, either.

1st Soldier.

D'you feel how the earth trembles, as though it were falling to pieces?

2nd Soldier.

Look over there. It doesn't seem as if *they* are pulling,—it's the Car which pushes them on.

3rd Soldier.

The Car appears to have come to life. How it roars! Often have I been at the Car-festival, but never before have I seen the sleepy old thing so lively. That's why it's not keeping to our highway, but marks out a path of its own.

2nd Soldier.

But what of the destruction it threatens? There comes the Poet,—let's ask him what it all means.

Priest.

Nonsense! You expect Poets to understand what we don't! They can only make up their own stories,—they know nothing of what's written in the scriptures.

1st Soldier.

The scripture texts have been dead for ages, Reverend Sir, that's why your words have ceased to carry weight. These Poets speak a living language, so truth uses their song for its own medium.

[*Enter Poet.*]

2nd Soldier.

Can you tell us, Poet, why the Car-festival has turned out all topsy-turvy this time?

Poet.

Of course I can.

1st Soldier.

What means it that the Car refused to move at the pull of Priest or King?

Poet.

Both had forgotten that it's not enough to believe in Time's Car,—one must also believe in its ropes.

1st Soldier.

Your words sound as if they had a meaning, Poet, but when we try to search it out, it can't be found.

Poet.

They had faith only in movement, not in the bonds which alone make right progress possible. Therefore have these bonds turned into angry whips which threaten to flay them alive.

Priest.

Are your Sudras, then, so wise as to understand the ropes and respect their bondage?

Poet.

They are not. They'll soon forget the spirit that makes things move and pin their faith on the vehicle and themselves. You won't have to wait long. They'll next be shouting: Victory to the Plough, the Hoe, the Spinning Wheel and the Loom! Then shall their own intoxication destroy them, and upset the rest of the world as well.

Priest.

When the Car thus stops again, it will be the Poet's turn to be called in, I suppose?

Poet.

Your joke's no joke, but a fact, friend Priest. Father Time has again and again called on the Poets, but they've never been able to jostle their way up through the crowd.

Priest.

And what strength have they to do the pulling?

Poet.

Not strength of brawn, most certainly. We poets believe in Rhythm and know that to fail to stop where a stop is called for, is to be out of time. We believe, further, that only when Beauty holds the reins, does Strength go straight. *You* have faith only in Violence—the faith of the coward, of the weak, of the inert.

1st Soldier.

But you preach, Poet, while the kingdom burns.

Poet.

Age after age have kingdoms burned, and yet that which was to live has always survived.

2nd Soldier.

And what are you going to do, Poet?

Poet.

I will sing a song of Good Hope and Courage.

3rd Soldier.

What good will that do?

Poet.

It will set the time of the people's steps as they pull the Car. Pulling out of tune is the root of all the trouble in the world.

Soldiers.

And what are *we* to do?

Priest.

And what am *I* to do?

Poet.

Do nothing in a hurry, I beg you. Watch and think and work, preparing yourselves for your Call.

[CURTAIN.]

THE MAHABHARATA

By Dr. M. Winternitz.

There is a well-known saying that "What is not in the Mahábhárata, is not in Bháratvarsha." Nothing is truer than that. And it seems absurd to talk about the Mahábhárata in one lecture. There are so many problems connected with the great Epic of India, that only a course of many lectures would suffice to do justice to this vast subject. Yet I have chosen the Mahábhárata for this evening's lecture for the very reason that speaking about the Mahábhárata means speaking about almost the whole of Indian literature, Indian religion, Indian social life; about India in general. And if I wished to show you the difference between the Indian and the Western attitude of mind in studying things Indian, I could not do better than showing you what the Mahábhárata is to us, why we study it and how we study it.

Every Indian is justly proud of the Mahábhárata, and every Indian probably knows something of the story and the characters of the great Epic. But I venture to doubt whether many Indians know what the Mahábhárata really is and all that it contains in its hundred thousand slokas. For, as I have said, it is rather a whole literature than one single poem. It is certainly not a mere epic like Kálidása's Raghuvamsa, nor even like Válmíki's Rámáyana.

Mahábhárata is an abbreviation of *Mahábhárat-ákhyána,* and means "the great story of the battle of the Bháratas." The Bháratas are mentioned already in the Rigveda as a warlike tribe, and in the Bráhmanas we first meet with Bharata, the son of Duhsanta and Sakuntalá, who is considered as the ancestor of the royal family of the Bháratas. The home of these Bharatas or Bháratas was the land on the Upper Ganges and the Jumna. Among the descendants of Bharata there was a prominent ruler, named Kuru, and his descendants the Kauravas were the ruling kings of the line of the Bháratas for so long a time that the name Kuru or Kaurava became the general designation for the

Bháratas, and their country was called Kurukshetra or Kuru land already known in the Yajurveda and in the Brahmanas.

In consequence of some family quarrel in the royal dynasty of the Kauravas, there arose a great and bloody war, in which the old family of the Kauravas or Bháratas was almost entirely annihilated. Although we know of this war only from the Mahábhárata, and not from any other sources, we shall have to look upon it as most probably a historical event. The story of this battle was sung in *ballads*, and out of these ballads some great poet of name unknown created a great historic epic of the battle of Kurukshetra. This old heroic poem forms the kernel of the Mahábhárata. But this story of the great war between the Kauravas and the Pándavas forms only a small part of the Mahábhárata, as we know it.

For around this kernel a huge mass of most heterogenous literature has accumulated. We find in it numerous tales which are only loosely connected with the principal story,—the episodes of the Epic,—some of which are independent epics by themselves, as for instance the Nala episode. Which of these episodes were already part of the oldest poem, and which were added to it at some later time, it is impossible to say. All this poetry is bard-poetry, sung by the Sútas, a class nearly related to the Kshatriyas.

Besides this heroic bard-poetry, there is also a great deal of Brahmanic literature to be found in the Epic,—a great number of myths and legends, in which miraculous facts are related of the old Rishis, the priestly ancestors of the Brahmans, showing how through sacrifices and austerities they obtain power not only over men, but even over the gods. And not only these Brahmanic myths and legends, but also a great many didactic poems relating to Brahmanic philosophy, ethics and law, were introduced into the epic.

While these parts of the epic are in some loose way connected with Vedic literature, there are other parts which contain *legends and myths, either of Vishnu or of Siva, in the style of the Puránas, and also cosmologies, as well as geographical and genealogical lists, such as occur in the Puránas.* We have,

therefore, to distinguish in the Mahábhárata both Vedic-Brahmanic and Pauranic-Brahmanic parts.

But legends relating to *Siva* are comparatively rare, and *Vaishnava legends and Vaishnava teaching* prevail in it to such an extent, that the Mahábhárata has largely the appearance of *a devotional book for the worshippers of Vishnu.*

Yet another class of religious literature is included in the Mahábhárata, which is neither Brahmanical nor Pauranic. It is closely related to Buddhist and to Jain literature, it insists on the ascetic view of life, the misery and sufferings of *samsára,* and teaches a morality of compassion and ahimsa, quite distinct from the ethics of Brahmanism with its ideals of the great sacrificer and generous supporter of the priests. It is what I call ascetic poetry, consisting of legends, moral tales, fables, parables, and ethical maxims.

Thus we find in this most remarkable of all literary productions side by side, and intermingled, warlike heroic songs with descriptions of bloody battle scenes, pious priestly poetry with (sometimes very tedious) discussions on philosophy, religion and law, and mild ascetic poetry full of edifying wisdom and of overflowing love towards man and beast.

Therefore in India itself the Mahábhárata has always been looked upon not only as a *Kávya,* an epic poem, but also as a *Shastra,* a manual of ethics, law and philosophy, with all the authority of a book resting on tradition (*Smriti*). And for at least 1,500 years the Mahábhárata has been to Indians not only an entertaining work of poetry, but at the same time a source of instruction and edification.

At least 1,500 years ago the Mahábhárata was already a work of about the same size as our present epic, with a long introduction comprising a frame story containing the history of the legendary origin of the poem and a glorification of it as a Shastra. It was even then divided into 18 Parvans, with Harivamsa as a *Khila* or "supplement"; composed of about 1,00,000 slokas, that is to say, it was in size a *satasáhasrí.*

To the present day this gigantic work, in spite of all the divergent elements which have entered into it, is generally considered in India as one uniform poem, composed by the

venerable Rishi, Krishna Dvaipáyana, or Vyása, who is also credited with the arrangement of the four Vedas and the authorship of the Puránas. (This is about the same as if one were to believe that the whole of Sanskrit literature from Kalidasa to Jayadeva was composed by one man.) According to the legend he was not only a contemporary, but also a kind of grand-father of the heroes of the Mahábhárata, occasionally taking part in the action of the poem.

In the introduction to the Mahábhárata we are told that the Rishi Vyása narrated the poem both in a short summary and in a fuller and detailed version; that different reciters begin the poem at three different places; and that its size was not always the same. Ugrasravas says that he knows the poem as consisting of 8,800 slokas, while Vyása states that he had composed the Samhita of the Bharata poem in 24,000 slokas, " and without the episodes the Bhárata is recited in this length by the wise."

These statements prove that, even in India, in spite of the pious belief in the authorship of Vyása for the whole poem, some recollection was yet retained of the fact that the Mahábhárata had gradually grown from an originally smaller poem to its present size. Of this fact there can be not the least doubt that our Mahábhárata, as we have it now before us, is a very different work from the original epic poem of the battle of the Bháratas. But if you ask me whether it is possible to point out exactly what belongs to the original poem, and what has been added to it at some later time, I could not give you a very encouraging answer.

I do not think that it will ever be possible to reconstruct the epic in its very oldest and original form, when it might have been a poem of 24,000, or even only 8,800 slokas. But what we can try to do, is : (1) To find out those additions to and corruptions of the text which are of comparatively modern growth, and are due to the carelessness or arbitrariness of scribes and copyists; and (2) to apply the rules of historical and literary criticism to the story itself, to the episodes, and to the didactic parts of our text, in order to find out contradictions between different parts of the poem, or to trace earlier and later parts according to our knowledge of the history of religious ideas and social institutions

in India. But the basis for such higher criticism and for any attempts at the reconstruction of the old poem must be *a critical edition of the text of the Mahábhárata,* which as yet does not exist.

The editions on which all Mahábhárata research has been based up to now, are those published in Calcutta 1834-39, and in Bombay (with Nilkantha's commentary) 1862. These give the text as found in one class of Mss. But we know now that Mss. of the Mahábhárata from different parts of India differ very much. And by a comparison of these Mss. it will be possible to purge the text at least from all those interpolations and bad readings which crept into it in the course of the last few centuries. Such a critical edition is now in the course of preparation at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Poona, and I hope our Visva-bhárati also will have a good share in the completion of this highly important work, without which all critical study of the great epic remains imperfect.

In the *Prasashti* at the beginning of the Mahábhárata, it is said that this poem is the best of all *itihásas.* He who has once heard *this* story, will no longer like any other kind of tale, just as he who has heard the song of the Kokila, does not care for the coarse voice of the crow!" It is also praised as the best manual of *Dharma, Artha* and *Moksha.* And the *Prasashti* concludes by saying that the Muni Krishna Dwaipáyana had composed this wonderful story of the Mahábhárata within three years. "What with regard to Dharma, Artha, Káma and Moksha is found in this book, does not exist elsewhere; what is not found in it, does not exist in this world!"

The critical historian of Indian literature will not join in this praise of the Mahábhárata. He will not see in it *as a whole,* a work of art at all, but a literary monstrosity. The Mahábhárata, as we have it now, is a vast compilation of the most heterogenous matter, a very jungle of poetry and of learning in which the most beautiful flowers of poetry grow side by side with weeds of no beauty at all; and the profoundest wisdom is found by the side of the silliest rubbish.

But for the very reason that the Mahábhárata represents rather a whole literature than one single work of poetry, it is

perhaps the most important work of Indian literature from a historical point of view; for, more than any other work, it affords us an insight into the inmost soul of the Indian people.

No one can understand the classical Sanskrit literature without the Mahábhárata, for it is perfectly true, what the *Prasashti* says, that the thoughts of the poets spring from this most excellent of all narratives (*itihása*), "as the three worlds arise out of the five elements." Moreover, also for the historian of philosophy, of religion, of social institutions and of Indian culture in general, the Mahábhárata is an inexhaustible source of information.

Ever since I have come to India, I have been asked over and over again, how I came to be interested in Indian studies. There is really nothing strange in this. If I tell you why I am interested in the Mahábhárata, I am telling you, why I am interested in the study of Indian literature and culture. I have always found that there is no more interesting study than the study of man. But no history of human thought, no history of religion, can ever be complete without the history of Indian religious and philosophical thought. And if the Veda gives us the most valuable information about the earliest stages in the development of Indian thought, the Mahábhárata is a very mine of information for almost all the later stages in this development.

In the philosophical portions of the epic, we find the beginnings of the Bhágavata religion in the Bhagavadgítá, and the ideas of Sámkhya and Yoga interwoven with Vedánta doctrines. In the Anugítá, and in many of the legends belonging to the class of ascetic poetry, we find doctrines which are hardly different from those of Buddhism and Jainism.

In the legends of Vasishtha and Viswámitra we find distinct traces of a struggle for supremacy between Kshatriyas and Bráhmans. The roots of these legends reach back into Vedic times, and they are likewise found, in different versions, in the Rámáyana and the Puránas. But there are also numerous tales and stories in the Mahábhárata which were invented merely with the purpose of glorifying the Bráhmans or inculcating some Brahmanical law or doctrine. We have for instance tales of disciples who go the utmost extreme in obedience towards their

teacher, like that of Uddálaka Aruni who is ordered by his teacher to block a leaking dam, and does this, when no other way presents itself to him, with his own body. Then the story is told of a king who, as a punishment for giving away a Brahman's cow to somebody else, is changed into a lizard.

Quite a number of such stories are told in order to show that there is no greater merit than that of giving cows to the Brahmans. In order to prove that it is very meritorious to give sun-shades and shoes to Brahmans, it is related how Yamadagni was once angry with the sun and was just about to shoot him down from the sky, when the sun-god pacified him just in time, by presenting to him a sun-shade and a pair of shoes. The Dána-parvan is full of such legends which are as tendencious as they are silly and childish.

If we wish to understand the true position which the Mahábhárata holds in the history of Indian literature, it is absolutely necessary not only to point out what is grand and beautiful in it, but also those passages which are neither of literary nor of moral value.

The stories to which I have just referred occur mostly in the didactic portions of the Mahábhárata, especially in the Anusásana-parvan, which is certainly one of the latest additions to the epic, later still than the Sánti-parvan, which cannot have belonged to the original epic either.

But you will ask, how do we know what is part of the old epic and what is not? As an answer to this question I can only ask you to consider one or two examples.

One of the most important incidents in the main story of the epic is *the marriage of Draupadí to the five Pándava brothers*. Here there can be no doubt that the story as related in the Mahábhárata in its present form is so full of inconsistencies that it cannot possibly have been told in this form in the original epic.

In *adhyáya* 169 of the Adi-parvan, Vyása meets the Pándavas and relates to them a story, how a certain Rishi once had a daughter who could not obtain a husband. She prayed to Siva, repeating several times her desire to obtain a virtuous husband. And Siva said: "Thou shalt have five husbands."

The maiden very naturally replies that she only wants one husband. But the god says: "Five times didst thou say 'give me a husband'. Therefore thou shalt have five husbands in a future birth." This maiden was afterwards born as Krishná, the daughter of the Pánchála king, Drupada, and Vyása concludes his story by telling the Pándavas that Krishná was destined to be their wife, and that they should set out for the capital of Pánchála, in order to fulfil such destiny and be happy.

Accordingly the brothers are said to have started for Pánchála, in order to be present at Draupadí's *Svayamvara*. Yet afterwards the story goes on to tell us how the Pánchálas meet Bráhmans who tell them what a grand festival is to be held at the court of Drupada on the occasion of his daughter's *Svayamvara*. They invite the Pándavas to join them, suggesting that by some chance one of them might be lucky enough to win Draupadi, and Yudhishthira decides that they should all go together to the *Svayamvara*. This story has no meaning, unless we assume that the Pándavas knew nothing about the *Svayamvara*, until they received the first intimation of it from these Bráhmans.

Then follows the story of the *Svayamvara* itself in which Arjuna wins the beautiful Krishná, after having drawn the bow of king Drupada and hit the target set up. The other kings are angry with King Drupada who is about to give his daughter to Arjuna. A fight ensues in which the Pándavas, who come to Drupada's assistance, remain victors. Thereupon the five brothers take Krishná with them and return to the potter's house in which they were staying (in the disguise of Bráhmans) with their mother Kuntí.

When entering the house they facetiously inform the mother about the wonderful "alms" they have collected. Kunti thinks that they have returned from their usual begging expedition and without looking up, replies with her usual phrase: "Enjoy it all together." When she afterwards sees what kind of "alms" it is, she is much embarrassed, and asks Yudhishthira what can be done in this dilemma, so that her word might not turn out untrue, and yet Draupadi commit no sin. Yudhishthira, however, without answering his mother's question, addresses Arjuna, saying: "Thou hast won Draupadi in the

Svayamvara, therefore thou alone shalt wed her." Upon this Arjuna replies: "Surely it is not meet that I should commit such a sinful act. That is not the law. Thou shalt wed her first, then Bhíma, then myself, then Nakula, and then Sahadeva." Now the brothers look on Draupadí and, seeing how beautiful she is, they all fall in love with her. Faced with this crisis, Yudhishthira suddenly remembers the story of Vyása and says: "Beautiful Draupadí shall be the wife of us all." And so the matter is settled without any reference to the words which escaped Kuntí. Arjuna simply takes it for granted that, according to law, Draupadí should be the wife of all the five brothers, and Yudhishthira agrees to it, in order to prevent disunion among the brothers, and because he remembers Vyása's tale.

But the question regarding the lawfulness of Draupadi's marriage is raised again later on, when King Drupada asks that the wedding of his daughter with Arjuna be celebrated, and Yudhishthira says: "I shall also have to marry her." Drupada does not seem to understand Yudhisthira's meaning, for he replies: "If it be your pleasure you yourself may marry my daughter, or you may give her in marriage to whomsoever (of your brothers) you think fit." But Yudhishthira persists:

Drupada does not seem to understand Yudhishthira's meaning, for he replies: "If it be your pleasure you yourself may marry my daughter, or you may give her in marriage to whomsoever (of your brothers) you think fit."

But Yudhishthira persists: "Draupadi shall be the wife of us all. Thus, O King, it has been ordained by my mother previously. Both I, myself, and Bhímasena are still unmarried, and this treasure, thy daughter, hath been won by Arjuna. But it is our custom, O King, that we enjoy every treasure together; and we do not wish to break this rule. Krishná shall become the lawful wife of us all; she shall take the hand of every one of us, in turn, before the fire."

Drupada thereupon exclaims: "It has been ordained that one man should have many wives, but who has ever heard that one woman should have many husbands? Thou who art pure and versed in the law should not commit an unlawful act opposed

both to the Vedas and to worldly usuage. How is it that thou hast formed such a resolution?"

Yudhisthira replies by pointing out that this is an old established law (*esa dharmo dhruvah*) and that the king should have no misgivings. Drupada is still not satisfied and proposes that the knotty point of the lawfulness of the polyandric marriage should be deliberated and finally settled by a committee consisting of Yudhishthira, Kunti and his son Dhrishtadyumna.

While these three are arguing the point in the presence of the King, Vyasa appears, and after some discussion he declares that Yudhishthira is right, that there is such an "eternal Law" (*sanátano dharmah*), according to which Draupadí must be the wife of the five brothers. Then he takes King Drupada aside and relates to him privately a most confused story—the Panchendropákhyána—to the effect that Indra had once offended the God Siva, and as a punishment had to be reborn on earth in five parts, and to be wedded to an incarnation of Lakshmí. The five Pandavas, he then went on to explain, were the incarnations of five particles of Indra and Draupadí was an incarnation of Lakshmí; therefore Draupadí in marrying the five Pándavas, would have really only one husband. Not content with his story, Vyása even grants King Drupada the boon of spiritual sight, which enables him to see the five Pándavas and Draupadí in their heavenly forms. Finally Vyása repeats again the story of the maiden who said five times: "Give me a husband".

This Panchendropákhyána, as it is told here, is utterly inconsistent and confused. It occurs in a much better version in the Márkandeya-Purána. The other story too is found in a Purána, the Brahmavaivarta-Purána. But in the latter the girl actually says five times, *patim dehi,* while in the Mahábhárata she only says: *patim sarvagunopetam icchámi.*

In my opinion there cannot be any doubt that all the different stories which are meant to justify the polyandric marriage of Draupadí, are later Pauranic legends which came to be interpolated in the Mahábhárata, and that the original epic simply related the story of the marriage without making any excuse for it. It is true that polyandric marriage, though it occurs in some

parts of India even to-day, never was a general Indian custom, and certainly not acknowledged by Brahmanical law. But it seems that this marriage of Draupadí with the five brothers was such an essential element in the old epic tale that no one ever thought of changing it, and the later revisers only endeavoured to justify it.

Three different stories were invented to find an excuse for this extraordinary marriage. *But no attempt was made to connect these stories properly with another or with the main story.* On the other hand, we find repeatedly the emphatic statement that this is an old established custom, *dharmo dhruvah* or *sanátano dharmah.*

This probably means, if anything, that polyandry was an old established custom in the family of the Pándavas,—at best a tribal, not a general custom. In Buddhist and Jaina versions of the Draupadí *Svayamvara,* Draupadí is said to have chosen not Arjuna, but all the five Pándava brothers at once.

I can only give one other example, which is however of great importance : this is the account of the *death of Bhíshma.*

Bhíshma is one of the most pathetic figures in the whole of the Mahábhárata. Nearly related both to the Kauravas and the Pándavas, he lives at Duryodhana's court and therefore feels in duty bound to fight against the Pándavas, whom he nevertheless loves as well as he does the sons of Dhritaráshtra. During the first ten days of the battle he leads the army of the Kauravas. Whenever the Kauravas are in danger of being defeated, Duryodhana reproaches Bhíshma with partiality towards the Pándavas, and tauntingly asks him to conquer the enemy or to resign the command to Karna.

It is the eighth day of battle. Bhishma, greatly hurt, promises to fight on the following day without showing any mercy to anyone except Sikhandin, for Sikhandin had been originally born a woman, and had only become a man by changing his sex with a Yaksha. On the ninth day of battle a terrible fight ensues, Bhíshma raging in the field like the god of Death himself, and with heavy losses the Pándavas are repelled at sunset. During the night the Pándavas hold counsel what to do. And strangely enough they decide to go in the middle of night into

the enemy's camp and ask Bhíshma himself what would be the best way of killing him. Bhíshma is complaisant enough to advise them that they should send Sikhandin to fight against him, but that Arjuna should screen himself behind Sikhandin and shoot at him.

This absurd story is told at the beginning of the *adhyáya* (VI, 107). But, in the middle of the *adhyáya,* Arjuna shrinks from killing his grand-father Bhíshma, remembering the days when as a child he sat on his knees. And, still in the same *adhyáya,* it is Arjuna himself who encouraged by Krishna proposes to kill Bhíshma by hiding himself behind Sikhandin. In making this proposal he does not mention a word about Bhíshma himself having given the advice to act in this treacherous manner.

Then follows the description of the fighting on the tenth day of battle. It is a bloody fight. Many thousands of warriors sink to the dust on both sides. Sikhandin, with Arjuna behind him, advances to fight against Bhíshma, and although Bhíshma tells him that he will not fight against him as being a woman, he continues to attack him. Both Arjuna and Bhíshma accomplish wonderful feats of bravery.

All of a sudden the story is brought in (VI, 115) of how Bhíshma is weary of life and addresses Yudhishthira with a request to conquer him, whereupon Yudhishthira with cheap bravery calls up his men to fight the mighty hero. The battle continues. Finally Arjuna standing behind Sikhandin, shoots arrow upon arrow against Bhíshma. Turning to Duhsásana, Bhíshma says: "These arrows which like messengers of Yama threaten to take my life, these arrows which like angry poisonous snakes rush into my limbs,—these are not Sikhandin's arrows, they are the arrows of Arjuna." Once more he rises and sends an arrow against Arjuna, who however catches it up and breaks it in three pieces.

Here again the story is repeated that Bhíshma has resolved to die, and that Vasus and Rishis come down from heaven, to congratulate him on his resolution. Arjuna succeeds in smashing Bhíshma's shield, and now the Pándavas rush against the unarmed warrior who at last just before sunset, sinks to the

ground, bleeding from wounds without number, and with so many arrows sticking in his body that he does not touch the ground in his fall, but rests on a bed of arrows.

It was the *dakshinâyana* (the southern course of the sun, the half-year before the winter solstice) when Bhîshma thus fell. But a heavenly voice urged him to postpone his death (he had the gift of dying at will) to the *uttaráyana* (the half-year before the summer solstice, when the sun is in the northern course). For according to the Upanishads the soul has to pass the *uttaráyana* when going up to the world of Brahman. Hence a *yogin* should die in the *uttaráyana*. As Bhîshma thus resolved to die in the *uttaráyana,* he was able to give to Yudhisthira all those instructions on philosophy and law which are contained in the Sânti and Anusâsana Parvans of the Mahâbhârata.

It seems to me that there can be little doubt that in the old heroic poem the advice to kill Bhîshma by placing Arjuna behind Sikhandin was given by Krishna and not by Bhîshma himself; that the old poem did not contain the story of Bhîshma being weary of life and of his asking Yudhisthíra to be good enough to see to his being slain, and that in the old poem Bhîshma, after his fall, lived only long enough to address some words of admonishment to Duryodhana and Karna.

It must, however, be stated that Sankara, the philosopher (8th century A.D.), knew already the story of Bhîshma choosing the *uttaráyana* for his death, as it is told in our Mahâbhârata. So these additions and changes were not made in modern times, but probably already in the first centuries A.D.

Nevertheless there is so much beauty left in the Bhîshma-vadhaparvan, even as we have it now, that it would not be difficult to cull from it a much shorter, but a much more beautiful account of the death of Bhîshma that would probably be nearer to the old poem than that found in our present text of the Mahâbhârata.

Thus I could show you in numerous cases how the present Mahâbhârata is full of contradictions and inconsistencies. Above all, there is one very striking contradiction running through the whole main story as told in our epic. If you read the Mahâbhârata, as we have it, you will find that the sympathies

of the poet are more on the side of the *Pándavas* than on that of the *Kauravas*. Yudhisthira and his brothers are always described not only as extremely brave, but also as noble and good, while the *Kauravas* are represented as being false and wicked. And yet, in the actual story itself, it is the Kauravas who fight honestly, while the Pándavas gain the victory only by treachery and dishonest fighting.

First I remind you of the death of the noble hero Bhíshma who falls a victim to the trick of Arjuna hiding himself behind Sikhandin. Then think of the abominable way in which the venerable teacher Drona is killed. At the instigation of Krishna, Bhímasena kills an elephant called Asvathaman, and then tells Drona that Asvathaman (this is also the name of Drona's son) has been killed. Drona does not believe it, but when Yudhishthira ever famous for his truthfulness, repeats the news, Drona is convinced, and in his grief throws away his arms, whereupon he is killed by Dhrishtadyumna. Karna, too, is killed against the canons of lawful war fare, while he is unable to fight on account of an accident that happened to his chariot. And again Duryodhana is slain by Bhíma against all rules of honest fighting. And strange to say, it is Krishna who advises the Pándavas to commit all these treacherous and dishonest acts. And yet this is the same Krishna who, in many parts of the Mahábhárata, in the Harivamsa, and above all in the Bhagavadgítá, is praised and glorified as an incarnation of Vishnu and as the very ideal of virtuousness.

How are all these strange contradictions to be explained? I have suggested, though only conjecturally, the following explanation :

In our Mahábhárata, the nucleus of the epic, the description of the great war, is placed in the mouth of Sanjaya, the charioter of Dhritarashtra, that is, in the mouth of a bard (?) of the Kauravas. In these battle-scenes the Kauravas appear in the most favourable light. The whole Mahábhárata, on the other hand, is recited by Vaisampáyana at Janamejaya's snake-sacrifice. This Janamejaya, however, is a descendant of the *Pándava* Arjuna, which agrees well with the fact that in the Mahábhárata as a whole, the Pándavas are preferred to the Kauravas. I therefore suggested that the original heroic songs

on the great battle were sung by bards who were connected either with Duryodhana himself, or with the house of Kauravas; but that, in the course of time, as the rule of the victorious Pándavas was more and more firmly established, these songs were transmitted to bards who were in the employment of the new ruling dynasty. In the mouths of the latter bards, those alterations came to be made, which cause the Pándavas to appear in a favourable, and the Kauravas in an unfavourable light, though the original tendency of the songs could never be completely effaced.

As regards Krishna, the tribe of the Yádavas to which he belongs, is described in several places of the epic as a cow-herd tribe of rough manners, and he himself is repeatedly scorned by hostile heroes as "cow-herd" or "slave". In the original heroic poem he was probably only a prominent leader of that cow-herd tribe, with nothing divine about him. It seems, that the Krishna of the epic and the Krishna of the legend were different personages, who later got merged into one.

From what I said, it seems clear that even the kernel of the epic Mahábhárata is no longer the work of one poet. Now we find that around this kernel an enormous mass of the most miscellaneous poetry and didactic matter has accumulated, and that even whole heroic poems (epics within the epic), extensive philosophical texts, regular law-books, and a complete Purána,—the Harivamsa—have been included in the Mahábhárata. He who would believe that all this, the Mahábhárata as we have it now, is the work of one single author, would have to assume that this author was *at one and the same time* a great poet and a wretched scribbler, a sage and an idiot, a genius and a pedant.

Also with regard to language and style and metre, our Mahábhárata is far from uniformity. Only quite in general can we speak of an "epic" Sanskrit. In reality the language of the epic is in some parts more archaic than in others.

Thus everything indicates that the Mahábhárata consists of earlier and later parts, belonging to different centuries. But what does *early* or *late* mean? What is really the time of the literature contained in the Mahábhárata? Only within very wide limits is it possible to give an answer to these questions.

We know from literary and epigraphical evidence that the Mahábhárata, already in the 5th century, contained such late insertions as the Anusásana-parvan and the Harivamsa; that it was at that time already considered a religious text-book, (*Smriti*) and that a hundred years later Mss. of the Mahábhárata had already reached further India (Cambodia). From this it follows that in the 4th century A.D., it must already have received that form in which we find it to-day.

On the other hand, there is no mention of the Mahábhárata, or of a war between the Kauravas and Pándavas, in any Vedic work. Although Kurukshetra, and such names as Janamejaya, Bharata, Paríkshit, occur and Kurus and Pánchálas are mentioned, there is nowhere in the Veda any mention of Pándu or the Pándavas, nor of Duryodhana, Krishna or Bhísma. It is only in the Vedánga literature, in the Sútras of Asvaláyana, Sankháyana and Panini that we find some mention of the Mahábhárata.

Some of the myths, legends, and poems, which are now included in the Mahábhárata, may go back to the times of the Vedas. And many moral tales and maxims, found in the Mahábhárata, belong to that ascetic poetry, which is contempraneous with, or even older than, Buddhist or Jaina text. But the Mahábhárata cannot have received its present size and form before the origin and spread of Buddhism, as allusions to Buddhism occur in our Mahábhárata; nor before Alexander's invasion, as the Yavanas or Greeks are often mentioned.

From all this it follows that the Mahábhárata, in its present form, cannot be older than the 4th century B.C., nor later than the 4th century A.D.

No fixed date can be given for the Mahábhárata as a whole. The age of every portion of it will have to be determined by itself. Such expressions, which everybody is tempted to use, as "this or that occurs already in the Mahábhárata" have really no meaning at all, as everything depends whether "this or that" occurs in an *older* or in a *later* part of the epic; or it may even be in a verse or an *adhyáya* that is not found in the best Mss. at all. In the time between the 4th century B.C. and the 4th century A.D., the epic gradually developed into the great encyclopædia of miscellaneous literature in 1,00,000 *slokas,* the *Satasáhasrí*

Samhitá. In the last recast the Brahmans must have had the greatest share, hence the prominence of Brahmanical and Vaishnava teaching in our present Mahábhárata.

You can see from all this *that the critical study of the Mahábhárata is only in its beginnings*. Above all, the very foundation of it, a critical restoration of the text on the basis of all the Mss. available from different parts of India, is still wanted. This work was to be accomplished by Western scholars under the auspices of the International Academies of Europe. It has now, as already mentioned, been undertaken by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, at Poona. In the library of the Visvabhárati, at Santiniketan, there is now a good collection of Mahábhárata Mss., and the work which I have inaugurated in Visvabhárati, in connection with the critical edition, will, I hope, be continued there under the supervision of the learned Principal, Pandit Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya.

There is, however, also some hope, that Western scholars, too will join the scholars of India, and that by the co-operation of East and West the great task will be accomplished.

Not only for the critical edition of the text, but also for the whole critical study of the Mahábhárata, will the co-operation of Eastern and Western scholars be wanted. And, as I said at the beginning of my lecture, the study of the Mahábhárata means the study of the history, the literature, religion and philosophy, the laws and customs, and the civilisation of ancient India. But no fruitful study of ancient India is possible without the co-operation of East and West.

Whatever we may think of the great ideal of Visvabhárati—the co-operation of East and West for the benefit of both, and for the future welfare of mankind,—of this there can be no doubt that the study of Indology can only be carried on profitably by the combined labours of Indian and Western scholars. In helping on this collaboration, Visvabhárati is rendering valuable service to the progress of Indological studies.

And therefore I fervently hope and wish, that Visvabhárati, this wonderful creation of a Poet's idealism, may prosper and always remain a blessing to India and a blessing to mankind.

THE FREEDOM OF NEGLECT

(*From the Bengali of Rabindranath.*)

When thou beside thee made me stand,
and held my hand,
And with thy loving made me blest,
My fear was lest
Needlessly I should lose thy love by e'en a jot;
Lest I, with wilful feet should stray
Wayward, leaving thy trodden way,
Where thou hadst wandered not,
Lest thoughtlessly should I
Tread where the thorns of thy displeasure lie.

But freedom, freedom wild and sheer
To-day hath rung out hard and clear
In bitter knocks of cold neglect and drear,
In far-flung infamy austere.
O smiling holiday, of all my days the crown,
When I have lost renown,
And bonds have slipp'd away from me,
When all I meet
I greet
With simple fellowship and free.

For me, once more, all space and meadow, grove and hill
Have sent their call insistent, shrill,—
Who'll stop or make me wait,
Me, who is past dishonour's gate?
Out of my home the air seduceth me
And makes me drunk with liberty,
And with the meteor shooting through the deep
Of midnight gloom,
Allured by death I dash and leap
Toward my doom.

I am the lowering storm-cloud from its moorings riven,
By tempests driven;
It has flung the red sun's golden crown beyond the west,
And swung the lightning's necklace on its breast.
On roads of liberty, thy cold neglectful gift,
Alone and swift
Speed onward e'er it must
All dusty with thy footprints' dust.

When it hath left its nest of gloom,
The mother's womb,
The child her face doth see.
When thine affection wraps me round,
Within its folds I lie enwound,
And know not thee.
When me the knocks of pain do rend
From thine enfolding love, and send
Away from thee,
In wakefulness my dreamy trance doth end,—
Thy face I see!

Translated by
KHITISH CH. SEN.

LOVE AND ETHICS

The modern sex problem consists in finding the proper equilibrium between, on the one hand, the requirements for the improvement of the species and, on the other hand, the increased demands of the individual to be happy in love; whereas formerly the conflict was only between society's demands for fixed marriage forms and the individual's demands to satisfy his sex life in any form.

All other problems of life must be regarded from this one point of view: the elevation of the species. Are the children of the millionaire as a rule strong, beautiful, and healthy? If not, then the mad chase after wealth must be condemned, not only as an indirect but as a direct hindrance to the improvement of the race. If some men or women are fit for love, but not for a single lifelong love, then the one-love idealist has no more right to impose his standard of love on them than they have to impose their standard on him.

Even our young "free-thinkers" do not regard the sex question with a free, open mind. They seem to think there are only two possibilities: either to be a slave to desire, or a slave to duty. And the rest "plead for chains and pray for barriers."

Do they not know that life is not a hard and fast fact, but a growth with undivined possibilities? Have they no glimmering that life often holds in store unexpected destinies, marvellous experiences, blossoms of our own being and other beings that we shall never foresee? Do they not feel that the beauty of life is its very incalculableness?

If we only perceived this, we should never demand a fixed ideal, no matter how lofty. Idealism, we should then perceive, may signify only one thing—that each person values his ideal so highly that he is willing to live and die for it, even though to others it may seem unimportant, foolish, or even shameful.

Nations may exist by virtue of their ignoble qualities as well as their noble qualities. The species can be elevated only by eradicating inherited savage and animal traits.

—Ellen Key.

SIDE-LIGHTS ON THE GENESIS OF THE BENGALI

By PANCHCOWRIE BANERJEE.

[In the late Panchcowrie Banerjee we have a lamentable instance of a big soul falling a victim to adverse circumstances. With the imagination and attainments of a true scholar, the gift of expression and sense of humour of a finished *litterateur,* he was reduced by an unkind fate to the position of a hack writer, condemned to pander to the tastes of the vulgar; and much of the venom which used to disfigure his journalistic writings has to be interpreted as the despairing cry of one who felt himself hopelessly fallen from his high estate.

Shortly before his recent death, we had the good fortune to secure his permission to publish in English his suggestive series of notes on the special features of the Bengali race; one of which we have now the melancholy pleasure of offering as our tribute to his departed spirit.—*Ed.*]

The port of Tamralipti, or Tamoluk (Tamluk as it is now called), played an important part in the making of the Bengali race. For, long before the time to which modern history can reach back, Tamluk had become well-known as the Indian port of communication with the further East, to which came vessels from as far as Japan and China and from which all East-bound travellers embarked.

Even now, to the traveller through Burma, Siam, Cochin China, Anam and Cambodia and to the islands of Bali, Sumatra and Java, it becomes abundantly clear, from the relics yet to be seen, that in the old days there was an intimate connexion between these places and India; that many settlers from India had colonised there; that many of their people, both men and women, used to journey to India. And Tamluk, as the portal through which this stream of human traffic found its way, became also the haven which offered these travellers its hospitality.

Thus, thanks to Tamluk, its eastern gate, Bengal came to be the rest-house for those who arrived in India by sea from the East, in the pursuit of commerce, or learning, or religion. This traffic reached its height in the Buddhist age, in which Tamluk

attained its fame as one of the most important ports of India; giving to Bengal the first taste of the wealth of new information, ideas and culture, which thus reached its shores and which, having enjoyed and assimilated, it passed on to the rest of the country. And so this port impressed on the people of this province their most remarkable feature,—a feature which still persists to-day, albeit often hidden away in the recesses of their being.

In the Buddhist age, class and caste distinctions were not strongly marked, having been levelled down and merged into its general amorphousness by the same process as that which has operated in Islam, namely that of promiscuous blood mixture. This process of racial intermingling found the fullest scope in Magadha and Bengal. I give here, mostly from memory, some interesting instances, which I have come across in my reading of old Bengali Literature, in the hope that more serious students may be induced to take up a critical study of this most fascinating subject.

The Vásishthya System of Shaiva Marriage.

Vasishtha was the name of a Tantric devotee of Bengal. He became the leader of the Vajrayána school of Buddhism. According to the canons laid down by him, full-fledged Indian Tantric Buddhists could, at pleasure, contract blood alliances with the further-Eastern peoples, taking to themselves, as *shaktis,* maidens belonging to the Chinese, Bhutanese or Ahamese races, under the Shaiva form of marriage, provided that such maidens were first of all admitted into the sect, and provided also that they possessed certain specified qualities.

This *Shaiva* form of marriage appears to have largely prevailed in Bengal during some fifteen hundred years before the British conquest. Rammohan Roy's was a *Shaiva* marriage. And, up to the time of Maharaja Krishna Chandra, of Nadia, it was the general practice of the Tantric Brahmins to have, as one of their wives, a *shakti,* married according to the *Shaiva* canons, who was usually, a non-Hindu girl—Burmese, Arracanese, Manipuri, Bhutanese, Ahamese, or Namasudra. The off-spring of such marriages were not only recognised by the

Hindu community, but they were not looked down upon in any way, being freely given and taken in marriage.

Such intermingling of blood appears to have gone on in Bengal from time immemorial and, owing to the influence of Tamluk, mostly with Mongolian races.

Contemporaneous with Srijñána Dípánkar, there was a Tantric devotee known as Guru Dumbo. He had a hundred and eight *shaktis,* who used to live in the manner of Tantric *Bhairavís.* He was the founder of the Tantric sect of *Kápáli* Brahmins. I am now told by a Pandit friend, who is versed in Tibetan lore, that translations of old Bengali records have been recently discovered from which it appears that this Dumbo was none other than the Tibetan Dum Pa!

Upto the time of the British domination, it was a general custom amongst Bengali Pandits to journey forth into Bhutan, Tibet and China, and for Pandits of those countries to come and live in Bengal. Even up to the days of Srikrishna Tarkálankár and Shankara Tarkavágísh, this kind of foreign travel was usual. Rammohan Roy, too, as we all know, went over into Bhutan and Tibet. Such travel, in those days, did not involve any loss of caste, or social censure. Rammohan was not persecuted because of his travels. Nor did Maharaja Nandakumar suffer ostracism in spite of his having a Pathan woman as *shakti.*

The fact of the matter is, that in the social system of Buddhism, Woman was given a very low place. She was looked upon as a creation af Mára (the Tempter) and despised accordingly. Consequently, under the Buddhist regime, the marriage system was extremely lax. The same is the case in most Mongolian countries, even to-day. The Vajrayána Buddhists of Bengal sought to rescue their society from this plight, and devised the *Shaiva* system in order to give greater stability to the prevailing looseness of sexual connection, by introducing a form of marriage tie, which however, put no obstacle in the way of the free intermingling of blood. Such far-sighted solution of a grave social problem fills one with wonder in these days of unthinking rigidity.

And so we see, even to-day,—in the ceremonials of our women, in our rules of social conduct, in our special forms of

worship, in the matter and manner of our religious discourses and readings,—that our traditions and festivities are permeated through and through with Buddhist ideas. In fact, an analytical comparison of the pure Vedic form of rites and ceremonials with ours will show that Bengal is two-thirds Buddhist still.

This greater influence of Buddhism in Bengal led to a larger racial synthesis amongst its people, in whose veins there came to flow a blend of the blood of all the East. Thus has Bengal come to be the land of creative unity, where also first took shape the modern union of eastern and western cultures, in which, however, that of the East remains the dominant feature.

Guru-worship the sign of Buddhist influence.

In Nepal we still have Hinduism and Buddhism living side by side. The Hindus are called *De'bhaju,* Deva worshippers; and the Buddhists *Gu'bhaju,* Guru worshippers.The worship of the Guru is not to be found in the Vedas, at least not in the Buddhist way. The initiator into the Vedic *Gáyatri* mantram was an *áchárya* (preceptor), not a *Guru* (Master).

In the cult of the Guru, as introduced by the Buddhists, the Master, or Leader on the path of Truth, was a veritable divinity with a place higher even than the tutelary deity of the Hindus, who was after all a symbol created by the worshipper himself. The Guru, for the Buddhist, was the very acme of creation; his word was law, his behest above all canons of good and bad,—he was holiness itself. Not so the guru of the Vedas, who was only a teacher, more or less like the modern schoolmaster.

Whenever, therefore, we come across a sect of Hindus, holding the Guru as a living god on earth, above all distinctions of class or caste, we may be pretty sure that it has a Buddhist origin, whether visible or hidden beneath the surface. In Bengal, at one time, the cult of the Guru was greatly predominant,—it is so still. For in all the Bengal sects, whether *Shákta* or *Vaishnava,* the place of the Guru is very high indeed. No demand is accounted too extravagant for him to make. He is held above all social considerations or traditional rules.

As a matter of fact, caste has never stood in the way of the

Guru in Bengal. We have had not only Brahmin, Vaidya and Kayastha Gurus, but they have risen from among the leading spirits of such sects as the *Kartábhajás,* the *Kishoríbhajás,* the *Sahajiás,* and of the wandering mendicant sects, all of whom enlist recruits from every caste, and amongst whom it is even forbidden to inquire into the caste of a Guru. Moreover, there was Balarám Hádi* of Meherpur, who never made any secret of his birth and yet counted all castes, including Brahmins, amongst his disciples. These followers of his were never outcasted and their descendants are still accepted in Hindu Society.

This resulted, in Bengal, in special reverence being paid to all teachers,—whether of religion, magical rites, or arts and crafts. Every kind of teacher had to be ceremonially appointed and thereafter was regarded as divine.

Our forefathers, for instance, used to learn the art of quarter-staff or single-stick play from experts belonging to the Namasudra, Poda, Bagdi or Aguri castes. Brahmins though they were, they had to put their sacred-thread out of the way before entering the arena, where they had first to salute their master by placing their weapons at his feet and bending to touch his knees, and then begin their exercises with his permission, after uttering the words *Jai Guru*! No Brahmin ever felt this to be derogatory, or was thought any the less of on this account by his fellow caste-men.

Even the school teachers were not always Brahmins,—Kayastha teachers being, rather, the more numerous. In Chandernagore there was a Bágdi schoolmaster whom his pupils called Bagh Mahashay. In many of the villages of Burdwan, teachers of the Aguri, Sadgopa or Kaivarta castes were to be found, to whose schools the Brahmin parents had no scruple in sending their boys, nor were the Brahmin pupils found wanting in the respect due to their teachers. It was perhaps the influence of such teachers which has prevented the idea and practice of touchability and untouchability from gaining a stronghold in Bengal.

Both Behar and Bengal, in former days, had constant intercourse with Nepal. Many Bengali families went over and settled

*The Hádis are accounted one of the lowest of castes.

there. So, for a proper study of the sociology of Bengal, a visit to Nepal and a study of the manscripts to be found there, is essential. In fact, without a study of Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet, the first pages of Bengal's social history will be entirely lacking.

The Original Brahmins and Vaishyas of Bengal.

The Bengali race is not only a product of the union of blood and culture of different parts of the East, but of the East and West of India as well. And in order to bring to light much that is still obscure about it, we shall have to pry into the records of everyone of our neighbours.

Neither the *kulín* (pedigreed) Brahmins, nor Kayasthas, of ours were originally Bengalis. They were, as is well-known, imported from Kányakubja (Kanauj). Let me however give some particulars not so well-known. Upon the rehabilitation of the Brahmin, after the passing of the Buddhist age, ten clans of Brahmins achieved recognition in the Skanda Purána—the five Gaudian clans of Aryávarta (upper Hindusthan) and the five Dravidian clans of Dákshinátya (the Deccan). The five Gaudian clans were the Gauda, the Utkala, the Maithila, the Sáraswata and Kányakubja. Gauda or Gaur was the name of Bengal; and the Gauda (or Gaur) clan were the original Bengali Brahmins, but they are no longer to be found in Bengal to-day.

Gaur Brahmins are, however, plentiful in the Panjab, Rajputana, Mandi and Garhwal, and according to some the Kashmir and Dogra Brahmins are also of Gauda origin. It appears that when, during the height of the Buddhist influence, onslaughts were made on the prestige of the Bengali and Magadha Brahmins, they emigrated from the province in a body; some going westwards through the mountainous tracts of Nepal and Mandi, settling first in Dehree and thence coming down to Garhwal and Rohilkhand; others following the course of the Ganges into the North-west provinces, receding further and further as the Buddhist influence pursued them, and eventually finding their final resting place in the deserts of Rajputana, the Northern extremity of the Panjab, and Kashmir. In Rajputana they still hold the chief position amongst the local Brahmins.

These Gaur Brahmins were bitterly hostile to the teachings of Siddhárta, the Buddha. Many of them were followers of the Jin cult. Even now, the priests of the Jaina temples and the ascetics of the Jaina sect are mostly Gaur Brahmins.

This *trek* of the Gaudians is cleverly recorded in the Skanda Purána in the guise of a story. Let me here tell another good story. The Gaudian clan of the Vaishya or *Sreshthí** community of Bengal, who were likewise mostly Jainas, followed the example of the Brahmins, owing to the same incompatibility with the Buddhist system, and went out of Bengal. These Gaudian *Sreshthís* had the handling of the commerce of the port of Tamluk, having the upperhand both in its export and import business. They eventually settled down mainly in Rajputana and Guzrat. Once, when in my paper I had a fling at the present-day Marwaris and Bhatias of Barabazar, calling them foreign exploiters, one of them taxed me with my slip saying that I, of all people, should have known that they were the real aborigines of Bengal while we Kanaujis were only newcomers of a thousand years or so!

He was right. Whether we Kanaujis came in a body in the time of Adisúra as is commonly supposed, or whether we came in batches shortly before or after, the fact remains that we were not originally of Bengal. In order to revive and maintain the purity of Vedic rites and usages, and with the object of giving to the Bengali an Aryan polish, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas had to be brought in from Upper India, now and again. Both our *Rárhi* and *Bárendra* Brahmins are Kanaujis. Of the Bengal Vedic Brahmins, the western section come from Mithila or Ajodhyá, the southern section from Utkal (Orissa) or Andhra (N. Madras).

Though long settled in Bengal, the western section of Brahmins, up to about the middle of the 16th century, did not intermarry with the local Brahmins, but went back to Kanauj to marry, or married the daughters of other western settlers. But at the time of the conflict between Moghul and Pathan, up to the time of the rule of Sher Shah, the troubled state of the country did not allow of travelling at pleasure to and from Kanauj. From that time on to the beginning of Akbar's reign, a period of social

*The Seth or Sethi of Guzrat. The Chetty (?) of Madras.

anarchy overwhelmed the Kanauji settlers in Bengal, both Brahmins and Kayasthas.

It was Devívara who restored order into this community by introducing a new system of classification, which amounted, in practical effect, to a social recognition of the intermixture which had meanwhile freely taken place between the original Brahmins and Kayasthas of Bengal and the Kanauji settlers. Nay more, during this period many a fair and blue-eyed daughter of Kanauj had been abducted by Pathans, but owing to the scarcity of Kanauji women at the time, many of these were subsequently rescued and brought back into the Hindu community. Occurrences of this kind fastened on the family in question the stigma of what was technically known as a "Fault", and these families in spite of their being tainted with the Yavana fault, the Rohilla fault, the Kesharkhan fault, and so on up to twenty-six in number, were given their place in the community by Devívara under a graded system, from which even the children of Hindus by Pathan women were not excluded.

In fact, Devívara neglected none of the methods, technically termed Cauterisation, Insulation, Absorption and Transmogrification, for the purposes of the fresh social synthesis which he created, being thus a social reformer whose achievements throw into the shade those of even the greatest of his present day prototypes. A careful study of Devívara's genealogical compilations will throw light on much that is obscure in the social evolution of the Bengal Hindus of to-day, as well as on the history of their forebears in the West of India. There may be a great deal that is spurious or extraneous in these manuscript compilations which will require critical sifting, but the outstanding fact that testifies to the magnitude of Devívara's performance, is the expansion of the handful of acknowledged Kanauji remnants left in this province into a recognised community of fifteen hundred thousand souls, with a systematic classification and regulated succession.

In this connexion it is necessary also to refer to the work of Raghunandana, the *smárta* priest. When the Buddhist chaos was followed by the Pathan anarchy in Hindu society, three several Brahmins attempted, by three different methods,

to Hinduise, or as we should say now-a-days, nationalise, the amorphous *samaj* which resulted. First Lord Chaitanya himself, who tried to reform the prevailing demoralisation with his religion of love; next Devívara who tried to bring about social cohesion with his ingeniously ordered system; and lastly the *smárta* priest, Raghunandana, who with his eugenic restrictions tried to establish the typical evolution of the Hindu, in features, manners and culture.

Raghunandana classified the Bengal Hindus broadly into Brahmin and Sudra, dividing the Sudras again into two classes, the *sat*-(superior)-Sudra, comprising those who accepted the Brahminic ideas of discipline, and the ordinary (or inferior) Sudras, who persisted in clinging to their Buddhist tendencies, and with whom all social intercourse (down to taking food or drink touched by them) was forbidden. Intermarriage was, however, freely allowed between the different subcastes of Brahmins and Sudras.

Here was the greatness of Raghunandana's genius manifested. By these concessions he, as a matter of fact, effected an amalgation of the Hindus and Vajrayána Buddhists of Bengal into a neo-Hindu society forty million strong. I do not know whether any section of Hindus in any other part of India can show a like achievement in the way of coherent social expansion on so vast a scale. To my mind this will always remain one of the distinctions of the Bengali race.

English education has not, so far, evolved in the Bengali an eagerness for accurate self-knowledge. I have jotted down these notes from my reading of a life-time, in the hope of awakening an interest in the subject,—with what success their publication will meet, I know not.

UMA

By Dr. Abanindranath Tagore.

Himavat and Menaká, King and Queen of the Northern Mountains, had daughters lovely as the Morning and Evening Stars. The Devas, glorious rulers of unseen and unknown Spaces, came and courted them and bore them away, one after the other, to regions of unapproachable distance, far above our earthly home.

Then came *Satí*—Truth itself—as new-born light into the darkened home of the Mountain King, and there she grew up, far out-shining in beauty the Stars, her sisters.

The mountain people called her *Himavatí,* Snowdrop; the Mountain King called her *Párvatí,* Maid of the Rocks; but Menaká, her mother, gave her the sweetest of all names—*Umá,* the Mother. And all wondered which of the gods would come to ask Umá for his spouse.

Siva, the Pure, the Good, the god who forever goes begging from door to door, came wandering to the Himalayas, where, at length, He rested in meditation, calm and silent as the eternal snows. And Umá gave herself up to the service of Siva, stringing for Him rosaries of lotus-seed, fresh each day, moist with morning dew, cool to touch.

Thus Párvatí waited on Siva, with the desire deep in her heart of being wedded to Him who is Pure, who is Good, who, God of gods, yet goes begging as the poorest of the poor.

Spring arrived in the mountains and, at the touch of the golden bough of the Wishing-tree which shaded the seat of Siva, Umá blossomed out in youth and grace, and her secret wish was whispered through and through Siva's peaceful retreat by the Spring breezes, fragrant with the scent of many a flower.

At last the long long days of His meditation came to an end and Siva opened His eyes. Umá came up and stood before Him, bending with the burden of her love's devotion.

For one fleeting moment the colour of Spring touched and illumined the snow peak, and Hara-Gaurí looked upon each other as through the veil of a golden mist. . . . .

Then rise sudden clouds, darkening the white light of the Spring morning. Lightning flashes dart forth from cavernous depths of darkness, setting on fire the green of the hill slopes. Thunder peals—the laughter of Rudra, the dread God of Destruction. Over the King of the Mountains lowers an anxious gloom. The distraught Queen Mother rushes forth like a mountain torrent, calling Umá! Umá! And, amidst the thick of the tumult, as a beam of light through some rift in its blackness, appears Nárada, softly playing on his *vína* sweet strains of hope, bidding all to rejoice.

For Siva has claimed his Bride!

Shall Siva indeed espouse Párvatí?

Yes, Siva shall be united to Satí, the Good to the True.

But Siva is so poor!

Aye, but with the power of His goodness He has conquered Death. Life comes from Him, in Him life finds its sustenance, unto Him life returns. Even the gods, with all the wealth of their divinity, bow to Him in worship.

But still our hearts yearn and cry for our little daughter Umá. Will she never, never come back into our desolate home?

Siva has claimed her. With Siva she must abide. But She shall come back to us as World Mother.

But when, oh when?

When the snows do melt and the rivers come running down.

[*Written for the Girl Guides.*]

IDEALS AND PROGRESS

The idea by which the enlightenment of Europe has been governed is the passion for the discovery of the Truth and Law that constitutes existence and governs the process of the world, the attempt to develop the life and potentialities of man, his ideals, institutions, organisation by the knowledge of that Law and Truth and the confidence that along this line lies the road of human progress and perfection.

The idea is absolutely just and we accept it entirely; but its application has been erroneous. For the Law and Truth that has to be discovered is not that of the material world—though this is required, nor even of the mental and physical—though this is indispensable, but the Law and the Truth of the Spirit, on which all the rest depends. For it is the power of the Self of things that expresses itself in their forms and process.

The idea by which the illumination of Asia has been governed is the firm knowledge that truth of the Spirit is the sole real truth, the belief that the psychological life of man is an instrument for attaining to the truth of the Spirit and that its laws must be known and practised with that aim paramount, and the attempt to form the external life of man and the institutions of Society into a suitable mould for the great endeavour.

This idea, too, is absolutely just and we accept it entirely. But in its application, and in India most, it has deviated into a divorce between the Spirit and its instruments and a disparagement and narrowing of the mental and external life of the race. For it is only on the widest and richest efflorescence of this instrumental life that the fullest and most absolute attainment of the spiritual can be securely based. This knowledge the ancients of the East possessed and practised; it has been dimmed in knowledge and lost in practice by their descendants.

Philosophy is the intellectual search for the fundamental truth of things; religion is the attempt to make the truth dynamic in the soul of man. They are essential to each other: a religion that is not the expression of philosophic truth, degenerates into superstition and obscurantism; and a philosophy which does not dynamise itself with the religious spirit is a barren light, for it cannot get itself practised. But, again, neither of these get their supreme value unless raised into the spirit and cast into life.

—AUROBINDO.

DADU ON THE MYSTERY OF FORM

By Prof. Kshiti-Mohan Sen.

In presenting these little sketches of our mediœval Indian devotees, I feel it would not do to take the reader too rapidly through the various realisations of the saintly Dádú (1544-1603, A.D.) which represent the cream of his spiritual experiences and needs must require time and thought for their proper assimilation. I am therefore taking them up one at a time.

As a help to the reader, I may be permitted to offer a few introductory observations on the central idea, running through all such experiences, which may furnish a key to the mystic world which they invite us to enter.

The world of Matter, solid, liquid or gas, possessed of extension, weight and other characteristic qualities, the analytical knowledge of which is the province of Science, is a fact which the Mystic does not deny; but, if the conclusions of science had been the last word in regard to this world, no door would have been left for our admission into the realm of the Infinite: Matter would have remained as an impenetrable wall standing guard at the threshold of Spirit, inertly unresponsive to any knocking of ours, however importunate.

The language of man has been mainly occupied with giving us information about the elements into which the finite world has been analysed; nevertheless, now and again, it reveals glimpses of the world of the Infinite as well; for the spirit of man has discovered rifts in the wall of Matter. Our intellect can count the petals, classify the scent and describe the colour: the unity of the rose finds its expression when we rejoice in it.

The intellect can, at best, give us only a broken view of things. The marvellous vision of the Seer, in spite of the scoffing in which both Science and Metaphysics so often indulge, can alone make manifest to us the truth of a thing in its completeness. When we thus gain a vision of unity, we are no longer intellectually aware of detail,—counting, classifying or distinguishing,—for then we have found admittance into the region of the Spirit, and

there we simply measure the truth of our realisation by the intensity of our joy.

What is the meaning of this unutterable joy? What we know by intellectual process is something outside ourselves. But the vision of anything in the fulness of its unity involves the realisation of the unity of the self within, as well as of the relation between the two. The knowledge of the *many* may make us proud; but it makes us glad when our kinship with the *One* is brought home to us. Beauty is the name that we give to this acknowledgment of unity and of its relationship with ourselves.

It is through the Beauty of Nature, or of Human Character or Service, that we get our glimpses of the Supreme Soul whose essence is Bliss. Or, rather, it is when we become conscious of Him in Nature, or Art, or Service, that Beauty flashes out. And, whenever we thus light upon the Dweller-within, all discord disappears and Love and Beauty are seen inseparable from Truth. It is really the coming of Truth to us as kinsman which floods our being with Joy.

This realisation in Joy is immediate, self-sufficient, ultimate. When the *self* experiences joy within, it is completely satisfied and has nothing more to ask from the outside world. Joy, as we know it, is a direct, synthetic measure of Beauty and neither awaits nor depends upon any analytical process. In our Joy, further, we behold not only the Unity but also the Origin, for the Beauty which tells us of Him can be nothing but radiance reflected, melody re-echoed, from Him; else would all this have been unmeaning indeed,—Society, Civilisation, Humanity. The progress of Man should, otherwise, have ended in an orgy of the gratification of his animality.

The power of realisation, for each particular Self, is limited. All do not attain the privilege of directly apprehending the universal Unity. Nevertheless, a partial vision of it, say in a flower or in a friend, is a common experience; and, moreover the potentiality is inherent in every individual soul, by dint of disciplined striving, to effect its own expansion and thereupon eventually to achieve realisation of the Supreme Soul.

By whom, meanwhile, are these ineffable tidings from the realm of the Spirit, the world of the Infinite, brought to us?

Not potentates or philosophers, but by the poor, the untutored, the despised. And with what superb assurance do they lead us out of the desert of the Intellect into the paradise of the Spirit!

When our metaphysicians, dividing themselves into rival schools of Monism, Dualism or Monistic-Dualism, had nevertheless joined in dismissing the world as *Máyá,* as the last word to be said on the subject, then, up from the depths of their social obscurity, rose these cobblers, weavers, and sewers of bags, proclaiming such theorems of the intellect to be all nonsense; for, had they not seen with their own inner vision, how the world overflowed with Truth and Love, Beauty and Joy?

Dádú, Ravidás, Kabír and Nának were not ascetics; they bore no message of poverty, or renunciation, for their own sake. They were poets who had pierced the curtain of appearances and had glimpses of the world of Unity, where God Himself is a Poet. Their words cannot stand the glare of logical criticism, they but babble, like babes, of the joy of their vision of Him, of the exstacy into which His music has thrown them.

Nevertheless it is they, not the scientists or philosophers, who have taught us of Reality. On the one side the Supreme Soul is alone; on the other, my individual soul is alone. If the two do not come together, then indeed there befalls the greatest of calamities, the utter emptiness of Chaos. For all the abundance of His inherent joy, God is in want of my joy in Him; and Reality in its perfection only blossoms where we meet.

"When I look upon the beauty of this Universe," says Dádú, "I cannot help asking: 'How, O Lord, did you come to create it? What sudden wave of joy coursing through your Being compelled its own manifestation? Was it really due to desire for self-expression, or simply on the impulse of emotion? Or was it, perhaps, just your fancy to revel in the play of form? Is this play, then, so delightful to you; or is it that you would see your own inborn delight thus take shape?' Oh, how can these questions be answered in words? cries Dádú. Only those who know will understand."(1)

(1) Kyo*n*kara yaha jaga racheu Gosái*n*, tere kauna binoda baneu mana máhi*n*?
Kai tumha ápá paragata karaná, kai yaha rachile mana nahi máná?
Kai yaha rachile khela dikháwai, kai yaha rachile khelahi bháwai?
Kai yaha tumhako khela piyárá, kai yaha bháwai kínha pasárá?
Yaha saba Dádú akatha kahání, marama jáne soï samajhai báni.

"Why not go to Him who has wrought this marvel," says Dádú elsewhere, "and ask: 'Cannot your own message make clear this wondrous making of the one into the many?' When I look on creation as beauty of form, I see only Form and Beauty. When I look on it as life, everywhere I see Life. When I look on it as Brahm then indeed is Dádú at a loss for words. When I see it in relation, it is of bewildering variety. When I see it in my own soul, all its variousness is merged in the beauty of the Supreme Soul. This eye of mine then becomes also the eye of Brahm, and in this exchange of mutual vision does Dádú behold Truth."(2)

The eye cannot see the face,—for that purpose a mirror is necessary. That is to say, either the face has to be put at a distance from the eye, or the eye moved away from the face,—in any case what was one has to be made into two. The image is not the face itself, but how else is that to be seen?

So does God mirror Himself in Creation; and, since He cannot place Himself outside His own Infinity, He can only gain a vision of Himself—and get a taste of His own Joy—through my joy in Him and in His universe.(3) Hence the anxious striving of the devotee to keep himself thoroughly pure,—not in any pride of puritanism, but because his soul is the play-ground where God would revel in Himself. Had not God's radiance, His beauty, thus found its form in the Universe, its joy in the devotee, He would have remained mere formless colourless Being in the nothingness of infinity.(4)

That is what makes the Mystery so profound, so inscrutable. Whether we say that only Brahm is true, or only the universe is true, we are equally far from the Truth, which, therefore, can only be expressed as both *this* and *that*, or neither *this* nor *that*.

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(2) Jinha mohana báji rachí, so tumha púchho jáï,
Aneka ekate*n* jyo*n* kiye Sáhiba kaho samjhái.
Ghaṭa parachaï saba ghata lakhaï, práṇa parechaï práṇa;
Brahma parachaï páiye Dádú hai hairána.
Sama drishti dekhï bahuṯa, átama drishti eka,
Bhahma drishti parachaï bhayá Dádú baiṯhá dekha.
Ehi naina dehake, ehi átama hoi; ehi naina Brahmake, Dádú palate doi.

(3) Apana rúpa ápa nahi jánai dekhai darpaṇa máhi*n*.

(4) Brahma sunna ta*n*ha Brahma hai niranjana nirákára,
Núra teja ja*n*ha jyoti hai Dádú dekhaṇa hára.

And Dádú can only hint at it by saying: "Neither death nor life is He; He goes not, neither does He come; nor sleeps nor wakes, nor wants nor is satisfied. He is neither I nor you, neither One nor Two. For," exclaims Dádú, "No sooner do I say all's one, than I find us both; and when I say there are two, I see we're One. So, O Dádú, rest content to look on Him just as He is, in the deep of your heart, and give up wrestling with vain imaginings and empty words.(5)

"Words shower," Dádú goes on, "when spouts the fount of the intellect; where realisation grows, there music has its seat."(6) When the intellect confesses defeat, and words fail, then indeed, from the depth of the heart, wells up the song of the joy of realisation. What words cannot make clear, melody can; to its strains one can revel in the vision of God in His revels.

"That is why," cries Dádú, "your universe, this creation of yours, has charmed me so,—your waters and your breezes, and this earth which holds them, with its ranges of mountains, its great oceans, its snow-capped poles, its blazing sun,—because, through all the three regions of earth, sky and heaven, amidst all their multifarious life, it is your ministration, your beauty that keeps me enthralled. Who can know you, O Invisible, Unapproachable, Unfathomable! Dádú has no desire to know, he is satisfied to remain enraptured with all these your charms, and to rejoice in them with you."(7)

To look upon Form as the play of His love, is not to belittle it. In creating the senses God did not intend them to be starved; and so, says Dádú, "the eye is feasted with colour, the ear with music, the palate with flavours, wondrously provided."(8). And we find that the body longs for the spirit, the

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(5) Nahin mritaka nahin jíwta nahin áwai nahin jái,
Nahin súta nahin jágatá nahin bhúkhá nahin khái.
Tanha chupa na bolana *main tain* náhin koi,
Dádú apá para náhin tanha eka na doi.

(6) Gyána lahari jahánte uthai báníka parakása,
Anubhava jahánte upajai sabada kiyá tahán bása.

(7) Ye saba charita tumháre mohana mohe saba brahmanda khanda,
Mohe pawana páni parameshwara, gagana mohe rabi chanda.
Sáyara sapta mohe dharani-dhará, ashtakula parawata meru mohe,
Tína loka mohe jagajívana sakala bhuvana teri sewa sohe.
Agama agochara apara aparampára, ko yaha tere charita jánahin,
Yaha sobha tumha ko sohaï, sundara bali báli jáun Dádú na jánahin

(8) Srabana ráte nádason, naina ráte rúpa;
Jiwbhá ráte swádason, Dádú eka anúpa.

spirit for the body; the flower for the scent, the scent for the flower; our words for truth, the Truth for words; form for its ideal, the idea for form; all this mutual worship is but the worship of the ineffable Reality behind, by whose Presence every one of them is glorified.(9) And Dádú struggles not, but simply keeps his heart open to this gushing shower of love, and thus revels in perpetual Springtime.(10)

Every vessel of form the Formless fills with Himself, and in their beauty does He gain them in return. With His love the Passionless fulfils every devoted heart and sets it a-dance, and their love streams back to the Colourless, variegated with the tints of each.(11) Beauteous Creation yields up her charms, in all their purity, to her Lord. Need she make further protestation, in words, of their mutual love? So Dádú surrenders his heart, mind and soul at the feet of his Beloved. His one care is that they be not sullied. He makes no vain effort to offer prayer or praise. Drunk with ecstacy, blinded with light,—to Dádú thus is He revealed!(12)

Do you object that evanescent Form is not worthy to represent the Eternal? But it is just because it is fleeting that it is a help, not a hindrance, to His worship. While returning, back to its Origin, it captures our mind and takes it along with itself. The call of Beauty tells us of the Unthinkable, towards whom it hies. In passing over us, Death assures us of the truth of Life. And Dádú's soul yearns and strains and leaps up to join them.

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(9) Deha piyárí jíwako jíwa piyárá deha. Dádú Hari-rasa páiye aisá hoï saneha.
Bása kahai main phúlako paún, phúla kahai main bása;
Bhása kahai main satako paún, sata kahai main bhása.
Rupa kahai main bhawako paún, bháwa kahai main rúpa;
Apasamen daü púјana cháhai, púјá agádha anúpa.

(10) Rasahimen rasa barasihai dhárá koti ananta,
Tanha mana nihachala rákhiле Dádú sadá basanta.

(11) Ghata ghata ápa dewai, ghata ghata ápa lewai;
Rasa mahain rasa rátá; rasa mohain, rasa mátá.

(12) Amrita píyá; núra máhain núra liyá; Dádú darasa diyá!

NOTES AND COMMENTS

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

It struck my heart with dismay, when I visited Ceylon, to find that the people there have lost the consciousness of their unity with their Indian kinsmen. Not having in their mind a continental background for their culture and aspiration, they have permitted their intellectual and spiritual individuality to miss its shelter, and easily to drift into the vagabondage of imitation.

They seem to have forgotten that political division is merely a division of property through which we can change our residence, but not our brotherhood.

When the mouth of the branch of a great river is choked up, the branch becomes reduced to a stagnant pool; the pulsation of the ocean heart no longer reaches it, nor the living message that flows from the hoary height of the inaccessible. A community, cut off from its parent stem by disastrous oblivion, is sure to forget the great meaning of its own personality, and thus to fall a prey to the force of other personalities and be bent and clipped and hammered by them to their purposes. A tree grows in its own shape and finds its fulfilment, but when cut off from its root it is, as timber, at the mercy of the dealers who turn it into toys of their fancy.

Life is original; it is adventurous; it seeks itself in endless experiments, the outcome of its spontaneous creative impulse. The people, who passively lend themselves to imitation, prove that life has lost its best claim on their hearts. It is the temptation of *Mára,* the evil spirit of Untruth, which whispers to us that we can be better than we are by seeming to be something else.

Thus we yield ourselves to being slowly robbed of the best gift given to us by God,—the dignity of our individual existence

with its infinite possibilities of creation. We must never allow this to happen on either side of the water that divides this island of Ceylon from India.

Our subconscious self has the accumulation of ages of creative memory, wherein has grown in secret the racial genius which creates. The whole current of a people's history generates its own special energy of guidance in this region lying beneath the surface-consciousness of our mind. This is why, when we try to imitate some other people's history, we remain so pathetically unaware of the absurdities that are produced.

There can be no doubt that Ceylon's subconscious mind, its racial mind, has unbroken connection with that of India; the language which she speaks has all the subtle modulations, her physical organism all the characteristic gestures, that belong to it. When her conscious self tries to ignore this, and attaches itself to some alien mentality, then its progress, like that of a three-legged race in which legs belonging to different individuals are tied together, takes on a gait which is neither efficient, nor graceful.

All our efforts which are unmixed imitations are lame, for in them our conscious will ignores the co-operation of its great partner, our fundamental personality, which nevertheless goes on working in the subsoil of our consciousness. History, properly studied, saves us from these unrhythmic strivings which go contrary to the direction of our inmost nature; and Ceylon, if she would do herself justice, must acknowledge that her intellectual and spiritual history runs in one stream with the cultural history of India.

The great religion of the Buddha had once spread its living spirit of Unity over the greater part of Asia. It drew races together and turned their hope and faith away from the turmoil of self-seeking.

True, the modern facilities of science have also established human communication across geographical barriers; but in this, man has only utilised physical forces to overcome physical obstructions. Buddhism was the first spiritual force, known to us in history, which drew close together such a large number of races separated by most difficult barriers of distance, by differences of language and custom, by various degrees and divergent types of civilization. It had its motive power, neither in international commerce, nor in empire-building, nor in scientific curiosity, nor in a migratory impulse to occupy fresh territory. It was a purely disinterested effort to help mankind forward to its final goal.

The religion, which flowed from the comprehensive mind of Buddha, has its negative aspect,—the control of passion and renunciation of self,—for purifying spiritual ideas and religious phraseology from all narrowness, anthropomorphic, or egotistic; it is the path of discipline through elimination. But this cannot be the whole of it; and that this has not been all, is amply proved by the direction and form which Buddhism has naturally taken in the greater part of the Buddhistic world.

A seed has, as a portion of its body, the sheath which is hard, which is for its protection; but it also has its kernel which grows, which takes it out of its obscurity and spreads its branches wide. The special aspect of Buddhism, that has grown and spread its branching life far away from its mother soil, that has subdued the savage in the races which were primitive, and inspired in them art and literature, must have been its religious nucleus, carrying in itself the vital principle of Buddha's teaching. This life force, which is the positive element in Buddhism, has neither been lost in India herself; it is still working in the heart of even her lattermost religions in various shapes.

I have lately been reading a book about Buddhism, written by one who professes this religion. Our Buddhist author has

tried to prove, that though Buddhism had its origin in geographical India, neither did its seed come from the Indian culture, nor did its root draw sap from the Indian mind. In other words, he would make out that it was an accident, which had no previous history, no natural genesis in a continued line of ancestors. In his zeal, the author is acrimoniously violent in the assertion that Buddhism as a religion is absolutely contrary to whatever preceded it in the religious history of India.

The child in the very process of birth manifests an apparent antagonism to the mother. All the same, the birth can never be a repudiation of the parent. There can be no question that Buddhism was one of the great products of the mother-heart of India.

We are free to admit that after centuries of its domination there was, outwardly a violent reaction against it. But when the history of that period is thoroughly investigated, I have no doubt that it will be found that what was forcibly thrown out was no part of the original idea of Buddhism, but a medley of miscellaneous aberrations, interpolated mostly from the dense tangle of non-Aryan superstitions.

That which I value most in my religion or my aspiration, I seek to find corroborated, in its fundamental unity, in other great religions, or in the hopes expressed in the history of other peoples. Each great movement of thought and endeavour in any part of the world may have something unique in its expression, but the truth underlying any of them never has the meretricious cheapness of utter novelty about it. The great Ganges must not hesitate to declare its essential similarity to the Nile of Egypt, or to the Yangtse-Kiang of China. Only a waterspout displays a sudden arrogance of singularity and vanishes in the void, leaving mother Nature ashamed of so monstrous a production!

Whenever we find, in the immensity of the human mind the prototype of something which we hold most precious in ourselves, we should rejoice. The pride of special possession can cling

only to those results of pot culture, which have merely market value. But great truths, like great monarchs of the forest, disdain to exhibit any extravagant speciality, which may offer temptation to those who are jealous of their proprietory right in rareness. The great is never alone; it has its aristocracy of the sublime, its common kinship of the immortal.

This is why, because I consider Buddhism to be one of the greatest religious achievements of man, I find a delight in discovering some of its essential similarities, not only to the spiritual thought of ancient India, but to that of other great religions as well. Is it right that we should have pride merely in some special production of man, but not in Man himself? Only those, who have no respect for humanity as a whole, can believe that Truth, in its supreme aspect, has been reached only once by one chosen people, leaving no alternative to others but to borrow from it, or else to live in utter spiritual destitution.

I cannot accept from anybody the statement, that Buddhism was a freak of human nature, and that as a religion, utterly unlike any other religion in the world, it is not only unrelated, but contradictory to its spiritual surroundings; that it is the science and art of self-extinction referring to a world where there is no true principle of unity anywhere, within man, or outside him.

Once again I assert that no religion whatsoever can for a moment stand on the basis of negation. It must have some great truth in its heart which is positive and eternal, and for whose sake Man can offer all that he has, and be glad. And, in this, Buddhism must have its inherent relation and resemblance to that spiritual endeavour in ancient India which led men to leave aside their material possessions and seek the fulfilment of their life.

And what is this truth which the Buddha preached, which is eternal? It is Dharma, difficult to be rendered in English,

Perhaps it may be translated as the 'highest ideal of perfection.' Certainly it is not a logical abstraction, nothing which is merely subjective. It is a reality which has to be reached, and according to the degree of our relationship with it, we attain the fulfilment of life. So this Dharma and the Brahma of our Upanishads are essentially the same, in regard to that which is supreme Reality.

The Buddhist Dharma does not consist in mere reason, blind and dark. It comprises within itself the highest spiritual enlightenment; it is eternally true for all beings; its laws are not restricted to any boundary of outward circumstances. Therefore it has the principle of reality, wisdom, and infinity. Likewise it has been said in the Upanishad : SATYAM, JNANAM, ANANTAM BRAHMA,—*Brahma is truth, wisdom, and eternity*. Then again, Dharma has not merely its reality, like the universal force of gravitation; it has its moral value, it leads us to peace, goodness and love. Similarly the Brahma of the Upanishad, who is SATYAM, is also SANTAM, SIVAM, ADVAITAM, which means that in Brahma is peace, goodness and union.

Dharma in Buddhism, or *Dharma Káyá,* as it has been termed in some of the Buddhist scriptures, is an eternal reality of Peace, Goodness and Love, for which man can offer up the homage of his highest loyalty, his life itself. This Dharma can inspire man with almost superhuman power of renunciation, and through the abnegation of self, lead him to the supreme object of his existence, a state that cannot be compared to anything we know in this world; and yet of which we can at least have a dim idea, when we know that it is only to be reached, not through the path of annihilation, but through immeasurable love. Thus, to dwell in the constant consciousness of unbounded love is named by Lord Buddha : BRAHMA-VIHARA,—*moving in Brahma.*

However, let me not dwell too long on my own idea about the essential points of resemblance between the truths of Buddhism and the truths inculcated in the Upanishads. Those who want to indulge their sectarian pride by believing that they only are the fortunate people in the world, in possession of a

religion absolutely solitary in its singularity, I shall leave to their exultation. But I cannot allow the historical link of Buddhism with India's mind to be ignored, and I must assert that the truest relationship among human beings is that of ideals; a relationship more real indeed than even the kinship of blood.

What is this Visva-Bharati, this international institution —I was asked to explain. It may not be out of place to reproduce in our journal the explanation which I gave of the Visva-Bharati ideal to my Ceylon audience.

The word "international" may sound too indefinite,—its meaning appearing large only because of its vagueness, like water acquiring volume by turning into vapour. I do not believe in an internationalism which is amorphous, whose features are broadened into flatness. The internationalism of Visva-Bharati must be the internationalism of India, with its own distinct character.

The true universal finds its manifestation in the individuality which is true. Beauty is universal, and a rose reveals it because, as a rose, it is individually beautiful. By making a decoction of a rose, jasmine and lotus, you do not get to a realization of some larger beauty which is interfloral. The true universalism is not the breaking down of the walls of one's own house, but the offering of hospitality to one's guests and neighbours.

Like the position of the earth in the course of its diurnal and annual motions, man's life, at any moment, must be the reconciliation of its two movements, one round the centre of its own personality, and another whose centre is in a luminous ideal comprehending the whole human world. The international endeavour of a people must carry the movement of the people's own personality round the great spirit of man. The inspiration must be its own, which is to help it in its aspiration towards fulfilment. Otherwise, mere cosmopolitanism but drifts on the

waves, buffeted by wind from all quarters, in an imbecility of movement which has no progress.

One of the objects of Visva-Bharati is concerned with the personality of the people she represents,—to rescue this personality from the dimness of ignorance. As a people we must be fully conscious of what we are. It is a truism to say that the consciousness of the unity of a people implies a knowledge of its parts as well as of its whole. But, we not only have no such knowledge of India, we do not even have an eager desire to cultivate it.

By asserting our national unity with vehemence in our patriotic propaganda, we assure ourselves that we possess it, and thus continue to live in a make-believe world of political day-dreams. The greater part of Bengal's knowledge of the Punjab consists in its relative position upon the maps of India,—a mere outline of information of a dead kind. How many Bengalis are there, who have studied the message of Nanak that has come to us through the Sikhs? And are there students in the Punjab, who have tried to understand the Vaishnavism of Chaitanya, and what place it occupies in the religious culture of India? India is the one place in the world, where the science of Ethnology can be studied with the full advantage; and yet it has never aroused any enthusiasm in our students.

The fact is, we have a very feeble human interest in our own country. We love to talk about politics and economics; we are ready to soar into the thin air of academic abstractions, or to roam in the dusk of pedantic wildernesses; but we never care to cross our social boundaries and come to the door of our neighbouring communities, personally to inquire how they think and feel and express themselves, and how they fashion their lives.

The love of man has its own hunger for knowing. Even if we lack this concerning our fellow-beings in India, except in our political protestations, at least love of knowledge for its own sake could have brought us close to each other. But there also we have failed and have suffered. For weakness of knowledge is

the foundation of weakness of power. Until India becomes fully distinct in our mind, we can never gain her in truth; and where truth is imperfect, love can never have its full sway. "Know thyself," for the giving of self is waiting for that knowledge. One of the endeavours of Visva-Bharati is to help us to *know* ourselves; and then along with it, her other mission will be fulfilled which is to inspire us to *give* ourselves.

What has given such enormous intellectual power to Europe is her concentration of mind. She has evolved a means by which all the countries of that continent can think together. Such a great concert of ideas, by its own pressure of movement, naturally wears away all her individual aberrations of thought and extravagances of unreason. It keeps her flights of fancy close to the limits of reticence. All her different thought-rays have been focussed in one common culture, which finds its complete expression in all the great European universities.

The mind of India, on the other hand, is divided and scattered; there is no one common pathway along which we can reach it. Upto the present, in all our patriotic endeavours, our effort has been to establish our unity on the basis of our common interest in the political or economic situation. It is like gathering coals for our railway journey, while the locomotive is nowhere to be found!

So I must guard myself against the least chance of my audience carrying away the belief that Visva-Bharati bases its ideal upon any ulterior expectation, political or otherwise. Its one object is to help each student to realise his personality, as an individual representing his people, in such a broad spirit, in such an unobstructed sunshine of spiritual expansion of consciousness, that he may know how it is the most important fact of his life for him to have been born to the great world of man.

IN MY GOD'S PRAISE

(*From the Sanskrit.*)

By MOHINI-MOHAN CHATTERJI.

Thou knowest all, great or small,
But knows Thee none as Thyself,
Causeless, timeless, all in one,
Stainless, formless, present yet
In all forms—sun, moon and fire,
All, beyond all, causes' Cause.
Beauty Thou on woman's face,
Mother Thou, life-stream's support;
First cry, Thou, of new-born babe,
Broken lisp of infants Thou,
Victor's exultation Thou,
Joy and sorrow of worlds all
Are from Thee, O Lord supreme!
Sin and merit are not Thine,
Perfect merit yet art Thou
Wise, unwise, Thou canst not be,
Plentitude of wisdom Thou.
Faith, unfaith, tho' same to Thee
Thou alone canst faith bestow.
Quintessence of causeless joy,
Called by Scripture sweetness pure,
Oneness, moreness, touch Thee not;
Word or mode define Thee not;
All beyond, Thou art but Thou.
Effortless Thy being pure
Makes, unmakes, sustains, the All.
Eternal Thou, Simple, One,
Spirit pure, all knowledge fails
What or how of Thee to know.
Works of Thine alone are known,
Essence Thine is Essence mine,
Silence is Thy perfect praise,
Worship perfect Thine is peace.

GEMS FROM DEVOTEES OF ISLAM

(From translations by Nicholson, Browne & Claud Field).

SUFISM.

[*Circa 800 to 1600 of the Christian Era.*]

The term Súfí has a specific religious connotation, and is restricted by usage to those mystics who profess Islam.

Súfism is not a system composed of rules or sciences, but it is a moral disposition according to the saying : 'Form yourselves on the moral nature of God'. It is this : 'that God should make thee die to thyself and should make thee live in Him.'

Mystics of every race and creed have described the progress of the spiritual life as a journey or a pilgrimage. The Súfí who sets out to seek God calls himself a traveller (*sálik*) ; he advances by slow stages (*maqámát*) along a path (*taríqat*) to the goal of union (*faná*) with the Supreme Reality (*al-Haqq*).

The inner light is its own evidence ; he who sees it has real knowledge, and nothing can increase or diminish his certainty. Hence the Súfís never weary of exposing the futility of a faith which supports itself on intellectual proofs, external authority, or self-regard of any kind. The barren dialectic of the theologian, the canting righteousness rooted in forms and ceremonies, the less crude but equally undisinterested worship of which the motive is expectation of gain in the life hereafter,—all these are so many veils to be removed in the course of spiritual progress.

The Súfí's path is not finished until he has traversed all the stages, making himself perfect in every one of them before advancing to the next, and has also experienced whatever states it pleases God to bestow on him. Then, and then only, is he permanently raised to the higher planes of consciousness which the Súfís call the Gnosis (*ma'rifat*) and the Truth (*haqíqat*) where the seeker (*tálib*) becomes the knower (*árif*) and realises that knowledge, knower and known are One.

—*R. A. Nicholson.*

(**Koran**, *sura* 24).

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche in which is a lamp, the lamp encased in crystal, as it were a gleaming star. From a blessed tree is it lighted, the olive neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would be luminous even though fire touched it not. It is light upon light!

* * *

Shiblí came to Junayd of Baghdád, saying: "They tell me that you possess the pearl of divine knowledge; either give it me or sell it."

Junayd answered: "I cannot sell it, for you have not the price thereof, and if I give it you, you will have gained it cheaply. You do not know its value. Cast yourself headlong, like me into this ocean, in order that you may win the pearl by waiting patiently."

* * *

The motion of every atom is towards its origin;
A man comes to be the thing on which he is bent.
By the attraction of fondness and yearning, the soul and heart
Assume the qualities of the Beloved, who is the Soul of souls.

—*Jaláluddín Rumí.*

* * *

O God, whatever punishment thou mayst inflict upon me, do not punish me with the humiliation of being veiled from Thee, because if I am not veiled from Thee, my torment and affliction will be lightened by the recollection and contemplation of Thee, but if I am veiled from Thee, even Thy bounty will be deadly to me. There is no punishment in Hell more painful and hard to bear than that of being veiled. If God were revealed in Hell to the people of Hell, sinful believers would never think of Paradise, since the sight of God would so fill them with joy that they would not feel bodily pain. And in Paradise there is no pleasure more perfect than unveiledness. If the people there enjoyed all the pleasures of that place and other pleasures a hundredfold, but were veiled from God, their hearts would be utterly broken. Therefore it is the way of God to let the hearts

of those who love Him have vision of Him always, in order that the delight thereof may enable them to endure every tribulation; and they say in their visions, 'We deem all torments more desirable than to be veiled from Thee. When Thy beauty is revealed to our hearts, we take no thought of affliction'.

—*Sarí al-Saqatí.*

* * *

God said to me: 'The least of the sciences of nearness is that you should see in everything the effects of beholding Me, and that this vision should prevail over you more than your gnosis of Me.'

—*Niffarí.*

* * *

In the market, in the cloister—only God I saw.
In the valley and on the mountain—only God I saw.
Him I have seen beside me oft in tribulation;
In favour and in fortune—only God I saw.
In prayer and fasting, in praise and contemplation,
In the religion of the Prophet—only God I saw.
Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance,
Qualities nor causes—only God I saw.
I ope'd mine eyes and by the light of His face around me
In all the eye discovered—only God I saw.
Like a candle I was melting in His fire:
Amidst the flames outflashing—only God I saw.
Myself with mine own eyes I saw most clearly,
But when I looked with God's eyes—only God I saw.
I passed away into nothingness, I vanished,
And lo, I was the all-living—only God I saw.

—*Bábá Kúhí of Shíráz.*

* * *

Music is a divine influence which stirs the heart to seek God: those who listen to it spiritually attain unto God and those who listen to it sensually fall into unbelief.

When an anchorite goes into a tavern, the tavern becomes his cell, but when a wine-bibber goes into a cell, that cell becomes his tavern.

—*Dhu 'l-Nún* (the Egyptian ferryman).

Do you know a name without a thing answering to it?
Have you ever plucked a rose from R, O, S, E?
You name His name; go, seek the reality named by it.
Look for the moon in the sky, not in the water.
Become pure from all attributes of self,
That you may see your own bright essence,
Yea, see in your own heart the knowledge of the Prophet,
Without book, without tutor, without preceptor.

—*Jaláluddín Rúmí.*

* * *

From all eternity the Beloved unveiled His beauty in the solitude of the unseen;
He held up the mirror to His own face, He displayed His loveliness to Himself.
He was both the spectator and the spectacle; no eye but His had surveyed the Universe.
All was One, there was no duality, no pretence of 'mine' or 'thine.'
The vast orb of Heaven, with its myriad incomings and outgoings, was concealed in a single point.
Although He beheld His attributes and qualities as a perfect whole in His own essence,
Yet He desired that they should be displayed to Him in another mirror,
And that each one of His eternal attributes should become manifest accordingly in a diverse form.
Therefore He created the verdant fields of Time and Space and the life-giving garden of the world,
That every branch and leaf and fruit might show forth His various perfections.
The cypress gave a hint of His comely stature, the rose gave tidings of His beauteous countenance.
Whenever Beauty peeped out, Love appeared beside it; wherever Beauty shone in a rosy cheek, Love lit his torch from that flame.
Beauty and Love are as body and soul; Beauty is the mine and Love the precious stone.

—*Jámí.*

"When thou regardest thyself as existent and dost not regard Me as the Cause of thy existence, I veil My face and thine own face appears to thee. Therefore consider what is displayed to thee, and what is hidden from thee."

—*Niffarí.*

* * *

Those who adore God in the sun behold the sun, and those who adore Him in living things see a living thing, and those who adore Him in lifeless things see a lifeless thing, and those who adore Him as a Being unique and unparalleled see that which has no like. Do not attach yourself to any particular creed exclusively, so that you disbelieve in all the rest; otherwise, you will lose much good, nay, you will fail to recognise the real truth of the matter. God, the omnipresent and omnipotent, is not limited by any one creed, for He says (Kor. 2. 109), *'Wheresoever ye turn, there is the face of Allah.'* Every one praises what he believes; his god is his own creature, and in praising it he praises himself. If he knew Junayd's saying, *'The water takes its colour from the vessel,'* he would not interfere with other men's beliefs, but would perceive God in every form of belief.

—*Ibn al-'Arabí.*

* * *

This world and that world are the egg, and the bird within it is in darkness and broken-winged and scorned and despised.
Regard unbelief and faith as the white and the yolk in this egg,
Between them, joining and dividing, a barrier which they shall not pass.
When He hath graciously fostered the egg under His wing,
Infidelity and religion disappear: the bird of Unity spreads its pinions.

Sheikh Abd al-Rahím ibn al-Sabbágh.

* * *

The Law without the Truth, is ostentation, and the Truth without the Law is hypocrisy. Their mutual relation may be compared to that of body and spirit: when the spirit departs from the body, the living body becomes a corpse, and the spirit vanishes like wind. The Moslem profession of faith includes both.

—*Hujwírí.*

Fools buy false coins because they are like the true.
If in the world no genuine minted coin
Were current, how would forgers pass the false?
Falsehood were nothing unless truth were there,
To make it specious. 'Tis the love of right
Lures men to wrong. Let poison but he mixed
With sugar, they will cram it into their mouths.
Oh, cry not that all creeds are vain. Some scent
Of truth they have, else they would not beguile.
Say not 'How utterly fantastical.'
No fancy in the world is all untrue.
Amongst the crowd of dervishes hides one,
One true fakir. Search well and thou wilt find.

—*Jaláluddín Rumí.*

* * *

My heart has become capable of every form: it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks.
And a temple for idols, and the pilgrim's Ka'ba, and the tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran.
I follow the religion of Love, whichever way his camels take. My religion and my faith is the true religion.

—*Ibn al-'Arabí.*

* * *

O Lord, in Thy eternal knowledge and power and will Thou dost punish the people of Hell whom Thou hast created and if it be Thy inexorable will to make Hell full of mankind, Thou art able to fill it with me alone, and to send them to Paradise.

—*Núrí.*

* * *

Even from earthly love thy face avert not,
Since to the Real it may serve to raise thee,
Ere A. B. C are rightly apprehended,
How canst thou con the pages of thy Koran?
A sage (so heard I), unto whom a student
Came craving counsel on the course before him,
Said: "If thy steps be strangers to love's pathways,
Depart, learn love, and then return before me.

For, shouldst thou fear to drink wine from Form's flagon,
Thou canst not drain the draught of the Ideal.
But yet beware. Be not by Form belated:
Strive rather with all speed the bridge to traverse.
If to the bourne thou fain wouldst bear thy baggage,
Upon the bridge let not thy footsteps linger."

—*Jámí.*

* * *

Was it not I that summoned thee to service?
Did not I make thee busy with My name?
Thy calling "Allah!" was My "Here am I!"
Thy yearning pain My messenger to thee.
Of all those tears and cries and supplications
I was the magnet, and I gave them wings.

—*Jaláluddín Rumí.*

* * *

O God, if I worship Thee in fear of Hell, burn me in Hell; and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, withhold not Thine everlasting beauty.

—*Rábiá* (the slave girl).

* * *

To feel at one with God for a moment is better than all men's acts of worship from the beginning to the end of the world.

—*Shiblí.*

* * *

Fear of the Fire, in comparison with fear of being parted from the Beloved, is like a drop of water cast into the mightiest ocean.

—*Dhu 'l-Nún* (the ferryman).

* * *

In my heart Thou dwellest—else with blood I'll drench it;
In mine eye Thou glowest—else with tears I'll quench it.
Only to be one with Thee my soul desireth—
Else from out my body, by hook or crook, I'll wrench it.

—*Abú Sa'íd.*

Ye who in search of God, of God, pursue,
Ye need not search for God is you, is you.
Why seek ye something that was missing ne'er?
Save you none is, but you are—where, oh, where?

—*Jaláluddín Rumí.*

* * *

The torrent of madness bore away his reason
And he spoke more impiously than before:
"Within my vesture is naught but God,
Whether you seek Him on earth or in heaven."
His disciples all became mad with horror,
And struck with their knives at his holy body.
Each one who aimed at the body of the Sheykh—
His stroke was reversed and wounded the striker.
No stroke took effect on that man of spiritual vision,
But the disciples were wounded and drowned in blood.

—*Báyazíd Bistámí.*

* * *

How long will you worship at the tombs of holy men?
Busy yourself with the *works* of holy men, and you are saved.

—*'Alá'uddín 'Attár* (the druggist).

* * *

Every moment the robber Beauty rises in a different shape, ravishes the soul, and disappears.

Every instant that Loved One assumes a new garment, now of eld, now of youth.

Now He plunged into the heart of the substance of the potter's clay—the Spirit plunged, like a diver.

Anon He rose from the depths of mud that is moulded and baked, then He appeared in the world.

He became Noah, and at His prayer the world was flooded while He went into the Ark.

He became Abraham and appeared in the midst of the fire, which turned to rose for His sake.

Then He became Jesus and ascended to the dome of Heaven and began to glorify God.

In brief, it was He that was coming and going in every generation thou hast seen.

Until at last He appeared in the form of an Arab and gained the empire of the world.
What is it that is transferred? What is transmigration in reality? The lovely winner of hearts
Became a sword and appeared in the hand of 'Ali and became the Slayer of the time.
'Twas even He that was crying in human shape: *Ana 'l-Haqq*!*

—*Jaláluddín Rumí.*

* * *

Some have abstained from food and drink, fancying that when a man's body is weakened it is possible that he may lose his humanity and be invested with the attributes of divinity. The ignorant persons who hold this erroneous doctrine cannot distinguish between humanity and the inborn qualities of humanity. Humanity does not depart from man any more than blackness departs from that which is black or whiteness from that which is white but the inborn qualities of humanity are changed and transmuted by the all-powerful radiance that is shed upon them from the divine Realities.

—*Abú Nasr al-Sarráj.*

* * *

Thy will be done, O my Lord and Master.
Thy will be done, O my purpose and meaning.
O essence of my being, O goal of my desire,
O my speech and my hints and my gestures,
O all of my all, O my hearing and my sight,
O my whole and my element and my particles.

—*Halláj* (the cotton-comber).

* * *

My God, my heart is a prey to perplexity in the midst of this solitude. I am a stone, and so is the Ka'ba; what can it do for me? That which I need is to contemplate thy face.

Rábiá (the slave girl).

**So'ham*, I am He.

If there be any lover in the world, O Moslems, 'tis I.
If there be any believer, infidel, or Christian hermit, 'tis I.
The two-and-seventy creeds and sects in the world.
Do not really exist: I swear by God that every creed and sect—'tis I.
Earth and air and water and fire, nay, body and soul too—'tis I.
Knowledge and learning and asceticism and piety and faith—'tis I.
The fire of Hell, be assured, with its flaming limbos,
Yes, and Paradise and Eden and the Houris—'tis I.
This earth and heaven with all that they hold,
Angels, Peris, Genies and Mankind—'tis I.

—*Jaláluddín Rumí.*

* * *

I love the Lord so much that I do not trouble about the enmity of Satan.

He is not sincere who does not forget the pain of affliction through his absorption in God.

—*Rábiá* (the slave girl).

* * *

I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar
With angels blest; but even from angelhood
I must pass on: all except God doth perish.
When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.
Oh, let me not exist, for Non-existence
Proclaims in organ tones: 'To Him we shall return'.

—*Jaláluddín Rumí.*

* * *

The distinctive feature of Oriental as opposed to European mysticism, is its profound consciousness of an all-pervading Unity. To become *God-like* is not the Súfí's aim, but to escape from the bondage of his unreal selfhood and thereby to be reunited with the One Infinite Being.

Yours very sincerely
W Winstanley Pearson.

From the original by Gaganendra Nath Tagore

W. W. Pearson

Thy nature is to forget thyself;
But we remember thee.
Thou shinest in self-concealment
Revealed by our love.

Thou lendest light from thine own soul
To those that are obscure.
Thou seekest neither love nor fame
Love discovers thee.

Rabindranath Tagore.

[*Translated from a dedicatory poem.*]

VISVA-BHARATI BULLETIN

I.

Mr. C. F. Andrews as President of the Assam Students' Conference.

Extracts from Opening Address.

It has been my long cherished hope to stay at least a fortnight with you in your most beautiful country of Assam, and I had made further plans to visit East Bengal and see Chandpur once more and other places, before my return to Santiniketan. But a greater call has come to me to start on a much longer journey to South Africa, and if all difficulties can be removed, I hope to start early in November.

The journey will have a great sadness for me, because on my first voyage to South Africa, nearly ten years ago, I had as my intimate companion, Mr. W. W. Pearson, whose death in Italy by a railway accident has cast a shadow of sorrow over my own life. In a most remarkable manner, we had shared together in India a common spiritual experience, and learned side by side at the feet of our great Indian teachers.

There was first and foremost, with us both, the daily inspiration of the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, whom we have ever loved to call our *Gurudeva*. Mr. Pearson, from the time that he had begun to study Bengalee, had made the Poet the dream of all his thoughts. He never ceased to have this devotion to him in all the years that followed; and he accompanied him in his travels to Europe, America and Japan.

Then, as I have said, just ten years ago, we both went out together to South Africa, to take part in the passive resistance struggle. There, together, we met for the first time Mahatma Gandhi. That too was a turning point in our lives and the inspiration of Mahatmaji's presence has been to both of us a spiritual strength, which has grown deeper and deeper as the years have gone by.

There was a third teacher, whom I have never met in person though his writings have meant very much to me,—Aurobindo Ghose. Mr. Pearson had the privilege of meeting him and of having long talks with him in Pondicherry on spiritual things. I know that he received from Aurobindo Ghose great help in his own meditative life and in the practice of *Yoga*—

a practice which evidently sustained Mr. Pearson in his last week of suffering after the railway accident occurred, for he bore his sufferings with a bravery and calmness which won the wonder of all.

I have begun by telling you what we have learnt from India because the principles of which I am going to speak to-day come from the very heart of India. They have been embodied in the lives of the greatest Indian religious thinkers of the past and the present. I can well remember the day when the Poet first explained to me the beauty of the Upanishads. I said to him, almost with indignation: "How is it that I have been here in India for more than ten years, and all this has never been told me before?" Perhaps, it had been my own fault, because I had come to India, in my ignorance, arrogantly to teach, when I ought to have come out, first of all, to learn.

This reading of the Upanishads under the guidance of a great teacher seemed to show me, in a moment of illumination, the living truth of the world. At such a gathering of students as this, it is clearly not the time to enter into the philosophic depths of the Upanishads, and I do not intend to do so, but I wish to take from them and put before you, some of their great truths, which are yet of such simple human interest, as even the youngest student here can understand and cherish.

I would refer in the first place to that grand idea: *Advaitam*. It formed part of the great *mantram*—**Santam Sivam Advaitam**,—which our *Gurudeva* gave to us on the eve of our journey to South Africa, and we eagerly learnt its meaning under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi himself; for he was a living embodiment of what the word **advaitam** really means—namely the oneness of all spiritual life, "to see (as the Upanishad tells us) the universal self in all things and all things in the universe itself."

I feel that the greatest of all the debts which the youth of modern India owe to Swami Vivekananda, is the renewal in practical life of this faith in **advaitam**. I have worked with the Ramkrishna Mission workers in cholera camps and in famine areas and I have watched with joy how they have learnt to identify themselves with the sick and the suffering and the outcastes of humanity.

I would ask you here, who are students, to practise in your own daily life such faith in **advaitam**. When the cholera-stricken patient is before you and you are afraid to touch him for fear of infection, say to yourself: "This poor cholera-stricken creature is the divine self in human form: it is myself!" When the stranger comes to you, whom you may

not naturally love, say to yourself the same thing,—"**Tattvam asi**". When the outcaste comes to you, the untouchable, the *namasudras*, say to yourself the same thing,—"**Tattvam asi**"—*Thou art that*! The Upanishads tell us further that the **Advaitam** is also the **Avarna**,—*He is without colour, or caste distinction.*

There is a beautiful resemblance to this same Eternal Truth in the teaching of the Sufi poets. There is one poem, which I have always remembered, where the Sufi poet says: "I knocked at the door of the heart of my beloved, and a voice said: 'Who is there?' I said 'It is I' but there came no answer. I suffered and pined away with grief, and then knocked again, and a voice said 'Who is there?' and I said 'It is Thou' and the door opened." Here is the same truth expressed in its mystical form.

In my own Christian faith, also, we have a parable where Christ stands before his true disciples in the midst of the poor and the needy, the prisoner and the stranger, the sick and the afflicted, and says in their names: "I was famine-stricken and athirst, I was hungry and naked, I was in prison and a stranger. In as much as you did service unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

I know how well Mr. Pearson had learnt these great truths, and how he had made his life one constant act of loving service of humanity. He had also experienced the intense joy of arriving at that further teaching of the Gita which is called **Niskám Karma**—*work without thought of reward.* In the same way, it is possible for each one of you, even while you are young, to endeavour to frame your lives (as he did) in the idea of Advaitam, of being wholly identified with others in love.

I have also seen such identification in the case of those, who have come from Assam and from East and West Bengal, to work in the cholera camp at Chandpur and in the flooded areas of North Bengal. I have found this same spirit of pure devoted service of humanity in other parts of India also. In Malabar, where untouchability had become almost an obsession of the mind, I have taken food in a Congress camp where Moplas and high caste Hindus, touchables and untouchables, ate their simple meal in love and unity. It was a living sacrament of the United India, which is certain to arise when the truth of **advaitam** is realised and fully known, and the spirit of love prevails.

Then, in the second place, there is that which follows from the original truth of **advaitam** itself,—the sovereign principle of **ahimsá**,—

paramo dharma ahimsá. Here again, Mr. Pearson had learnt most wonderfully from India to think as Hindus have thought from the earliest religious times. In his first speech in South Africa, he said: "It has been easy and natural for me to understand this passive resistance movement of Mahatma Gandhi because my own ancestors belonged to the Society of Friends, who practised in their lives the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount." The Sermon on the Mount had been learnt in his own life from childhood. Therefore the great Hindu teaching of **ahimsá** was nothing strange to him. He only felt, as he studied Hinduism, that he was learning its sublime religious truths afresh in new and beautiful forms. It strengthened his faith in the Sermon on the Mount, which he had learnt from his mother as a child.

In conclusion I would like to make clear two points. First of all to practise Ahimsá truly requires far greater courage than to die fighting in battle. Moral courage is of a far higher order than mere physical courage. Secondly, I want you to realise that anger in thought has no less to be controlled than anger in violent deeds. Christ said: "He that is angry with his brother is in danger of judgment." That is why the Upanishads have laid such stress on the control of the senses which are like a team of unruly horses, ever seeking to run wild in man's nature. There is another saying which I would put before you: "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Europe to-day is a terrible example of unrestrained violence and uncontrolled passion, and is slowly dying in agony, because she refuses to believe the teaching of Buddha that "Evil cannot be overcome by evil but only by good."

In these opening words, I do not intend to say any more to you than this, because I want to leave one clear impression with you and not to confuse you with talking of too many things. At the conclusion of the Conference I shall have another opportunity of speaking more in detail about the hopes and aims of young Assam.

Extracts from Concluding Address.

During these days that I have been with you, I have been asked to answer again and again certain questions, which are evidently pressing hard in your own minds for a solution:—Are you to maintain the Assamese script and the Assamese language? Are you to welcome Indians from other provinces to fill your country? Are you to make Calcutta your

literary centre? Are you, as individuals, to leave your country for the wider world, or simply to do all you can to improve your own country? It is clearly not possible for me to solve difficult local questions such as these with my short experience, but I can give you briefly some of those ultimate principles of human life, which may help you to solve them for yourselves.

First, let us be clear about the future. It is as useless to put up barriers of protection against the coming unification of mankind, as it is absurd to try, like old King Canute in the story, to prevent the tide of the sea from advancing. Our tiny barriers of race and caste, language and creed and territory may, for a few brief moments, stop the incoming tide, but they cannot finally resist the onward flow of humanity to the common goal of one race, one faith, one soil, one language, one people. For mankind is essentially one family,—one in a common spiritual life, one in a common destiny of unification.

When we come to think clearly, we find that, apart from the human infirmities of jealousy and pride and greed, it was the geographical hindrance of the past which really kept us aloof, and isolated us, and made us strangers to one another. But every single day of our lives, as it passes, shows us more clearly that this geographical obstruction is being broken down by modern travel. When, in the near future, flying in the air becomes as cheap and easy as riding on a bicycle, when also news is circulated round the world at lighting speed by a million newspapers and by wireless broadcasting, then all the divisions and sub-divisions of caste in this country, and all the "White Australia" and "White South Africa" jealousy in the outside world, will not prevent the fusion of races and the ultimate unification of mankind.

Therefore, you, who are still young, and the children of the future, must boldly step out into this newly acquired heritage of human growth and human freedom. Just as the old geographical barriers had to give way before the onward march of the epic hero, Rama, while he united all races and became the comrade of the aborigines, ushering in a new age of Indian unification, even so, in a similar manner, you who wish to lead the heroic advance to-day must be ready to adventure forth into a far larger country than your ancestors ever knew.

You can no longer be Hindus, Musalmans, or Christians, in the old narrow sectarian sense of the words. You can no longer be Hindustanis, Bengalis, Assamese, in the old narrow racial sense. You cannot come to

a full stop in front of any obstructions of that kind: you must go right forward up to the ideal of one universal race, one universal religion, in one universal country,—the world itself. It was this larger country, this country of Humanity, which the forest dwellers of the Asrams of ancient India loved to enter, in all their dreams and thoughts. They beheld ideally a vision of that unification of man which we ourselves are seeing made practical to-day.

But, you will ask me, "Does this doctrine of the 'Advaita' mean that we are to give up loving Assam, as Assamese, that we are to give up loving India, as Indians, and only love Humanity instead?" Oh, how many times have I had that question put to me by students who cannot understand. It seems almost to be the one puzzle to-day of the whole of Indian student life. And yet the answer is so simple. Do you remember those lines from the Poet Laureate quoted in the Golden Treasury?

> I could not love thee dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more.

You cannot love your own country less, because you love Humanity more. That is spiritually impossible. The ordinary laws of arithmetic do not hold good in the spiritual life. You do not subtract from one side in order to add to the other. Such arithmetic is the law of the physical life, but it is just the reverse in the spiritual. What, for instance, could be a greater mathematical absurdity than the saying of Christ: "He that loseth his life shall save it." Yet in the highest sense of self sacrifice, we find this to be true every single day. So you may rest assured, that if you determine to sacrifice yourself for humanity, you will not love your own country less, but more.

Human life in Europe to-day is terribly out of focus because of the feverish anxiety to get every single thing for one's own country at any cost, even at the expense of others. This is a narrow patriotism which only leads to confusion, for the mind becomes blurred by passion. The only true perspective of human life is that of one human family—one human race, with one heart and soul. Europe had this as her ideal given to her by Christ, but she lost it in the great War.

Grasp that ideal of human unity, as the Rishis did of old, and all the rest follows. Patriotism at once falls into its proper place, and does not become a monstrosity. Would you pardon me, if I refer to my own personal experience? When I say truly that I love India with all my

heart, do you suppose, for a moment, that I love England any the less on that account? I believe you would despise me if I loved my own country less: and rightly, too, for I should then be a renegade. But, as I have said, such a thing is spiritually impossible.

How absurdly simple these things really are in practice. When you learn these spiritual lessons for the first time it is just like learning to swim. You have only to trust yourself to the water, stretch out your arms and legs, and very soon you will find yourself at home in the new element. But if you shiver on the bank and refuse to plunge in, you will never know the refreshing joy of a good swim. Even so, if you do not plunge into the great flood of Humanity you will never know the purest joy of human life, the joy of disinterested service; and your patriotism will be a narrow stunted thing, whose very narrowness will do your country more harm than good.

Let me, just as a teacher does, go over the whole lesson again, in another way. I fully believe that in the course of time, all the separate languages, races, religions of the world will be unified. Yet I myself should be the last person to deny the benefit which has come to mankind, in the past, through the colour and variety and manifold beauty of different languages, races, religions. But, as the Isa Upanishad tells us, all these are the moving things in this moving world; they are never stationary; they rise and fall, they assume wide and wider ranges; yet they are all enveloped by God; and ever draw nearer to **Advaitam.**

> Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

II.

Sanskrit Books for German Scholars.

(An Appeal by the President, Visva-bharati.)

We have received a circular from Mr. G. M. Jadav, of Shivaji Road, Baroda, who states that in Germany there are twenty-three Universities, in which, with only one or two exceptions, Sanskrit is studied. It will suffice to mention some of the names of the Professors whom Mr. Jadhav met when he was there — H. Jacobi (Bonn); R. Schmid (Munster);

W. Schubring (Hamburg) ; F. O. Schroner (Kiel) ; L. Heller (Griefswald) ; W. Geiger (Munich) ; H. Lüders (Berlin)—to indicate the wealth of talent that is still devoted in Germany to Indology. The vanishing value of the Mark, however, makes it practically impossible for German Scholars to purchase Sanskrit books published in India; and Mr. Jadav appeals for contributions of Sanskrit books from India, which should be sent to Prof. H. Lüders, Berlin University, who for his part has undertaken to distribute the same amongst the German Universities.

It can well be imagined under what cruel conditions the German Indoligists of to-day have to carry on their devoted labours; and when we further consider the high quality which German Scholarship has always stood for and, in particular, remember the vital part it has played in the revival of our ancient culture in India itself; the least we can do is to reciprocate by helping to the best of our power in a cause which is after all our own. A substantial contribution from India will not only serve to mark our sense of past benefits received from German Scholars, but also to express our sympathy in these days of their tribulation.

We therefore cordially endorse Mr. Jadav's appeal as well as his request to furnish him, at the address given above, with a list of all contributions sent. The Visva-bharati proposes shortly to make up a selection of duplicate Sanskrit volumes in its library for the purpose. It may happen that sympathisers who are not in a position to contribute books would like to make contributions of money. To assist such donors the Visva-bharati is prepared to receive and fund such money contributions and purchase thereout, and forward to Prof. H. Lüders, such books as he, on behalf of the German Universities, may requisition. Such contributions are to be sent to Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis, Joint Secretary, Visva-bharati, 10, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.

III.

First Annual Report of Visva-bharati.

1923.

Santiniketan Asram.

The site of the Asram was originally a bare spot in the middle of open country and was notorious for being the haunt of dacoits. Here Maharshi Devendranath Tagore came on one of his journeys, and he was so attracted

with the place that he pitched his tent under two trees, the only two to be seen there, and spent his time in meditation and prayer. These Saptaparni trees are still to be seen at one extremity of the Asram, with the open plain stretching out before them to the western horizon; and on the horizon; and on the marble slab which marks the place of his mediatation is inscribed the text of the Maharshi's meditation:

He is the repose of my life,
The joy of my heart,
The peace of my spirit.

The Maharshi's love for the place of his realisation wrought in it a complete transformation. The chief of the Dacoits came and surrendered himself to the Maharshi and entered into his service. Rich soil was brought over, trees and shrubs planted, and a garden and orchard laid cut. A house was built and later on a temple. When the place had thus become a thing of beauty the Maharshi dedicated it, as an Asram, to the public under a Trust Deed, executed in 1887, endowing it with an Annuity of Rs. 6,000, for the use of everyone who wished to meditate on God, free from all antagonisms of creed and sect.

Apart, however, from the periodical sojourn of the Maharshi and members of his family, there was very little activity in the Asram in the beginning. A formal daily service was maintained in the Mandir, and outside guests were few and far between.

Although mention is made in the Trust Deed of a Library and a Brahma-Vidyálaya, no such institutions actually came into existence until 1901, when a beginning was made by Rabindranath Tagore with the permission and approval of his father. His immediate object was to found a school where study would not be divorced from life, where the pupils would become members of a larger family, regarding the affairs of the institution as their own, and where they would find themselves in an atmosphere of freedom, mutual trust and happiness. The school was maintained in the beginning from the slender resources of the Founder himself, supplemented by a small allotment from the Trust funds, practically no support being asked or received from the public. From the outset, however, the management and administration of the institution was carried on along simple constitutional lines by a committee elected by the Staff by whom also the Principal and other departmental heads were usually elected.

In 1913, when the Founder visited England, a few English friends had expressed their readiness to help him and share in his work at Santiniketan.

C. F. Andrews, W. W. Pearson and J. W. Petavel, came back with him from the West and joined the Asram, and the outlook of the institution widened. It became clear that Santiniketan must not be confined merely to a school, albeit freer and happier than other schools, but must represent larger ideals and be a centre for the culture of all the East.

In 1920-21 the Founder visited the West again, and this time he was convinced that the world problem demanded an international attitude of mind and that Santiniketan must stand for nothing short of a universal ideal which should contemplate the meeting of East and West, in common fellowship of learning and in common spiritual striving, and embrace humanity itself.

When the Founder came back from his tour in 1921, he set to work formally to inaugurate this new type of institution under the name of Visva-bharati.

In December, 1921, at a public meeting held at Santiniketan, presided over by the Founder and attended by among others, Dr. Brojendranath Sil, Sir Nilratan Sarkar, Principal S. K. Rudra, Prof. Sylvian Levi, such formal inauguration took place and a Provisional Constitution was adopted. A Visiting Professorship in connection with the institution was founded and Professor Sylvain Levi was appointed the first Visiting Professor.

Just about this time L. K. Elmhirst came from America equipped to start a scheme of rural work and village education which he had discussed with the Founder in America. The founder offered him the use of his house, garden and farm at Surul, and this made it possible to add Sriniketan, the Department of Rural Reconstruction, to the Institution.

With these materials Visva-bharati was formally constituted by being registered under Act XXI of 1866 on the 16th May, 1922, and thereupon the Founder definitely made over to it all the assets of the institution, which had so long been his personal property, by executing the necessary documents and also made a gift of the copy-right of all his Bengali books. By the end of 1922, the Samsad (Governing Body), the Board of Trustees and the other constitutional bodies and offices were gradually brought into working order and the financial administration was definitely taken over by the Visva-bharati office with effect from the 1st of January, 1923.

Membership.

The total number of members of the Visva-bharati at the end of the year is 416 of which 278 are from Bengal and 138 are from outside. The

total number of Life Members is 91 of which 14 are from Bengal and 77 are from outside.

Office Bearers.

At the first meeting of the Samsad, 4th February, 1923, the following were elected Pradhanas:

Mr. Justice Dinshaw Mullah of Bombay, Babu Bhagavandas of Benares, Sir Ashutosh Mukerji, Sir Nilratan Sarcar and Babu Surendranath Tagore of Calcutta.

C. F. Andrews having resigned the office of Upacharya, Surendranath Tagore was nominated to fill the vacancy. C. F. Andrews, however, remained a Pradhana.

Surendranath Tagore resigned the office of the Artha-Sachiva on the 16th January, 1923. He, however, continued to serve on the Finance Committee as a member. Satis Ranjan Das was appointed by the Samsad to act as Artha-Sachiva for the year 1923, under statute 15 clause 5. He has administered the funds of the Visva-bharati on the strictest constitutional lines, and the improvements recommended by the Finance Committee were mainly due to his initiative.

The Board of Trustees appointed Messrs. Ray & Ray, Chartered Accountants, auditors for the Visva-bharati.

General Office.

The new Constitution brought into existence an organisation of a definitely federal type. The Samsad with its Standing Financial Committee had become the Central Governing Body. Efficient machinery was needed for the work of co-ordinating the different departments and also for keeping in touch with the general public. The attention of the Karma-Sachivas was therefore mainly engaged in creating a strong office both in Calcutta and in the Asram head-quarters. A permanent Assistant Secretary was put in charge and the financial administration was centralised at Santiniketan under a whole time accounts-officer.

Financial Arrangements.

Early in the year the Samsad prepared a scheme of departmental finance with complete central control through monthly accounts and audit. The standing Finance Committee reviewed the departmental accounts

month by month. Close watch was kept on both income and expenditure and every possible opportunity was taken to achieve efficiency and effect economy. During the first six months work was carried on under a budget deficit of nearly 50,000 Rupees. The financial situation called for immediate retrenchment everywhere, and on the recommendations of the Finance Committee revised budget estimates were passed by the Samsad in July. As the work progressed it was further recommended that departmental responsibility should be more clearly recognised both as regards income and expenditure.

This recommendation was accepted by the Samsad.

Samsad.

The Samsad met five times during the year under review and transacted a large volume of important business. Meetings were held alternately at Santiniketan and Calcutta and the attendance of members was fairly.

There were eighteen meetings of the Finance Committee of the Samsad during the year. The value of a Standing Committee with wider scope was increasingly felt and recommendations in this regard have been placed before the Parishat.

President's Tour.

The President undertook an extended tour in Western India in March —April last and then again in November—December. He was accompanied by C. F. Andrews and Kshitimohan Sen during the first tour, and by L. K. Elmhirst and Gour-gopal Ghose during the second. H. P. Morris and Gurdial Mallik rendered indefatigable service in the preliminary work of creating public interest. These tours were eminently successful in rousing interest in the Visva-bharati ideal and gaining for the Institution substantial practical support.

Obituary.

The sad death of Mr. W. W. Pearson, due to a railway accident while travelling through Italy, on the eve of his return to his beloved Santiniketan, has been the greatest calamity suffered by the Institution in the whole course of its history. The President has, in different connexions, given expression to our deep sense of irretrievable loss, and we need add nothing further here.

The Visva-bharati Vidyáyatana.

A. Educational Institutions at Santiniketan (Bolpur)

1. Uttaravibhága.

Pandit Vidhusekhar Sastri was in charge.

Professor M. Winternitz of the Prague University was the Visiting Professor for the year and stayed in Santiniketan during the greater part of it. In addition to delivering regular courses of lectures on the history of Sanskrit Literature, he took up the work of training scholars in the critical editing of manuscripts. His deep scholarship and his benign personality have made a living contribution to the building up of the Asram. Seven students studied under him the art of editing books from a critical comparison of Mss., and Indological research work generally. Dr. Winternitz also gave a series of valuable lectures on the History of Indian literature.

Teaching Work.

The Session began with 34 students including girls. The present number of students is 27 in all, including 9 women students, 14 being from Bengal, 2 from Madras, 6 from Guzrat, 1 from Coorg, 2 from Travancore.

There were 12 Professors, namely, V. Bhattacharya, M. Winternitz, C. F. Andrews, F. Benoit, K. M. Sen, M. Collins, K. Misra, P. Bose, S. K. Das, A. Chatterji, A. Bachman, V. Lesny and A. Tarkatírtha.

The subjects taught were:

Sanskrit Literature, Prakrit, Tibetan, Dharmasástra, Persian, English, Bengali, German, French, Logic, Philosophy, Nyáya, Vedanta (Upanishad), Greek, Political Economy, and Sociology.

There were 13 students in the Sanskrit literature class; 3 in Prakrit; 2 in Tibetan; 2 in Dharmasástra; 2 in Persian; 17 in English; 15 in Bengali; 7 in German; 18 in French; 6 in Logic; 1 in Nyáya; 1 in Vedánta; 2 in Greek; 5 in Political Economy and Sociology.

Occasional lectures were delivered in different subjects by the following:

Prof. V. Lesny, Prof. P. Geddes, Dr. I. J. S. Taraporewala, Dr. G. S. Jones, Dr. Khambata, Dr. Radhakumud Mukerji and Dr. Radhakamal Mukerji.

Editing Work.

Mr. N. B. Utgikar, of the Bhandarker Oriental Research Institute, Poona, stayed in the Asram for some time and discussed the whole plan of editing the Mahabharata, in which his Institute is engaged, with Dr. Winternitz, Pandit V. Bhattacharya and the students. The tentative edition of the *Virata Parvan* issued from the Bhandarkar Research Institute under his editorship was examined. A portion of the *Adi Parvan* was actually edited in collaboration.

The preparation of an edition of the *Abhidharmattha-Sangaha* was begun by Pandit Nitai-Vinoda Goswami.

A critical edition of the *Agamasástra* of Gaudapada was undertaken by Pandit V. Bhattacharya, in connection with the fellowship held by him during the year under report.

2. Purva-Vibhága.

The Purva-vibhága was in charge of Pramada-ranjan Ghose.

The session began in January last with 159 pupils on the roll including boys and girls; the number on the rolls at the end of the year under report is 151, including 131 boys and 20 girls. Out of these 110 are paying in full; 10 receive scholarships varying from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 8/- per month; and 31 receive free tuition. There are three Mahomedan pupils; and the number of Non-Bengalis is 31.

In the interest of teaching and discipline the Old *Adhyápaka Sabhá* (conference of teachers) was revived. It meets regularly once a month to discuss the progress of students and kindred matters. The late Mr. Pearson took a leading part in these discussions.

Miss Flaum taught manual work in the lower classes for the greater part of the year, thereby removing a long-felt want. Attempts are being made to continue her work.

Two boys sat for the Matriculation examination of the Calcutta University as private candidates in March last. Both passed in the First Division, one of them securing more than 80 per cent. in Mathematics.

The health of the school was on the whole satisfactory all through the year. There were a few mild cases of mumps but only one case of serious illness (Erysipelas) which proved fatal.

The boys of the school took part in several foot-ball matches both in and out of Asram and were in almost all cases successful. The Santiniketan team won the Suhasini Shield.

3. Nari-Vibhága. (*Woman's Department*).

This was in charge of Mrs. Snehalata Gupta during the first part of the year and of Miss Hembala Sen during the latter part.

There were 30 girl students of whom twelve resided in the Girls' Boarding. There was considerable life and activity in this department. The girls undertook the supervision and feeding of the boys of the Sisu-vibhaga. They also took part in the nursing of the sick in the Hospital, the amusement of the smaller boys in the evening by story-telling and conducting out-door excursions and picnics. They had regular lessons in cooking during the early part of the year under Miss Green. A few of the girls under the guidance of Pratima Devi and Sukumari Ghosh regularly went out to the surrounding villages to teach women needle-work and other handiwork. Most of the girls have been attending the Music classes.

4. Kala-Bhavan. (*Art Department*)

(*Fine Art Section*). Nandalal Bose was in charge.

There were 14 students of whom 6 were girls. The section has sustained a loss in the departure of Asitkumar Haldar who has been appointed curator of the Jaipur Art Museum. During this year the Kala-bhavan sent its paintings to 5 outside exhibitions, twice in Calcutta and once in Madras, Rajmundry and Benares. Besides these several exhibitions were held in the Asram. The staff and students of this department have executed 70 original paintings. The students have made several reproductions of their paintings by the lithographic process.

(*Crafts Section*). The girls have been engaged in decoration work on wood and earthen-ware. Miss Andree Karpeles helped in this department during the first part of the year. Abanindranath Tagore paid a visit to the Asram and gave a great impetus to the enthusiasm of the students. The specimens of the work of this section which were on exhibition were highly commended.

The *Library* of Arts and Crafts has been greatly enlarged during the year by the presentation of books, photographs, prints and other collections from various countries, specially Germany and France.

(*Music Section*). Dinendranath Tagore and Bhimrao Shastri were in charge.

Though there were only 12 students including 6 girls specially enrolled

in this section, a large proportion of the students of other departments also took regular lessons here.

The services of Ranjit Singh have been secured this year to teach instrumental music, thereby removing a long felt want, but we are still in need of more good teachers.

The students of this section have made a notable contribution to the cultural activities of Visva-bharati, which have gained a good deal of public appreciation.

5. Publishing Department.

The publishing rights and stock in hand (worth nearly Rs. 78,000) was purchased from the Indian Press, Allahabad, at a capital outlay of Rs. 26,000/- under suitable financial arrangements by the general office in January, and a book shop started in Calcutta in August last. The gross sales this year, have exceeded previous figures, amounting to nearly Rs. 21,000/-. We report with great pleasure that the copy-rights of the works of Dwijendranath Tagore and Balendranath Tagore have been assigned to the Visva-bharati.

The outlook of the Publishing Department is very hopeful and it is expected to yield a considerable income to the general Funds.

The Visva-bharati Quarterly was started in April with Rabindranath Tagore as editor but as the whole responsibility came to rest with Surendranath Tagore, he was placed in charge as editor from the second number. The Quarterly has met with a cordial reception from the public and may be expected to render good service in disseminating the Visva-bharati ideal. There has been a small deficit in the current year but from next year the Quarterly is expected to be self-supporting.

6. Hostel and Boarding.

The supply of good food to suit the different classes of boarders at a moderate charge was the main problem of this department, and was complicated by the absence of adequate market facilities near by, as well as by fluctuations in price. It gradually became clear that a centralised general kitchen for teachers, students, staff and servants proved wasteful and therefore unduly expensive. During the latter part of the year, therefore, it was split up. The teachers and staff made their own arrangements. The smaller pupils were put in charge of the women's section. The servants were made separate allowances in addition to their pay. And the kitchen

building (including the dining hall) was improved and made over to the older students for running separate messes of their own. This arrangement seems likely to work well.

7. The Hospital.

During the year under report there were over 2,000 outdoor and about 200 indoor patients. The average daily attendance was about 8.

Mild epidemics of two infectious diseases viz., Mumps and Dengue prevailed during the year. Dengue cases were mostly imported from Calcutta. Though there were no cases of serious illness, except only one of Erysipelas (which proved fatal), the difficulties experienced in dealing even with the mild epidemics above-mentioned, point to the urgent want of a proper isolation ward, in order to check the progress of any infectious disease that may be accidentally imported.

Though the hospital has much improved in regard to the arrangements for the comfort of the patients and sanitation generally, much still remains to be done. More furniture, instruments and appliances are needed, as well as separate operation and dressing rooms.

We appeal to all well-wishers of the institution to contribute to the Pearson Memorial Fund which has been started to remedy these defects, which were a source of the keenest anxiety to him.

B. Institutions at Sriniketan (Surul).

The Department of Rural Reconstruction.

Preliminary Work.

"To win the friendship of the villagers by taking a real interest in their life and welfare and making a lively effort to assist them in solving their problems,"—this was the object with which the Founder sent out the present Director, L. K. Elmhirst, with a member of the Santiniketan staff and ten students, in February, 1922, to take charge of the farm and garden, now called Sriniketan, on the edge of the ancient village of Surul.

It was through the application of a little First Aid to the victims of a village quarrel that the first mistrust and suspicion was broken through. Concentration upon a small area in the beginning led to a rapid growth of friendship, assisted by night schools for the boys, and cemented by the formation of the first troup of village scouts.

"To take the problems of the village and field to the class room for

study and to the experimental farm for solution," was the aim which the Director placed before his colleagues at the outset, but it was not long before it became clear that the main problem of the village was ill-health, which would have to be solved before any advance in agriculture or industries could be made.

This was found to involve considerations of fresh food supply, treatment of manure, draining, cleaning and co-operation generally, so that from the start the department was faced with a comprehensive programme. General principles of attack were formulated, but each village, with its own peculiar problems, had to be approached in a special way.

General Progress during the year.

The Director left India in March 1923 leaving Santosh Mazumdar in charge.

The work of village reconstruction under the able leadership of Kalimohan Ghose, supported by Miss G. Green in charge of the Charitable dispensary achieved splendid results. The activity of the village scouts under Dhirananda Roy, one of our own students, more especially in the saving of two whole villages from fire when the villagers themselves were at a loss what to do, and in the remarkable reduction of the percentage of cases of malaria in the neighbourhood, has shown how well the villagers are able to help themselves with the right kind of sympathetic approach from outside.

Public confidence has been proved by the requests to look after the *Melas* in the neighbourhood, but above all in the election of Kalimohan Ghose to the Bolpur Union Board. The local lawyers have since this election agreed to support the programme, and the Congress representatives have expressed their approval of the general policy.

At the beginning of the year two short courses were held for village boys. They brought their own food, camped out and were instructed in scouting and handicrafts of economical value to themselves and to the village. The response of these boys to this kind of teaching has been so encouraging as to lead to a concentration of the efforts of the department on such short courses.

The time and energy that has to be spent on the *Bhadraloke* boy, by way of recognised lecture-room and laboratory courses, is so disproportionate, that it is becoming clear that a suitable apprenticeship course,

in the section the business of which he wants to learn, will be much more useful to him.

As the different sections develop, it is hoped that the department will be able to add to the number of young men who are engaged in research work into the principles of Village Reconstruction.

We have to acknowledge with thanks valuable assistance received from Mr. Arthur Geddes, and advice from Messrs. Khambata and Iyenger of the Public Health Department and Dr. Gopal Chatterji of the Anti-malaria Society.

The following is a brief account of the different institutions which have advanced sufficiently to demand separate notice.

1. Agriculture.

The Farm and Garden.

In the farm we had Paddy, Jute, Jowar, Impi, Soy Bean, Cow-pea, Castor, Horse-gram, Sun-Hemp, Sugar-cane and Potato. We tried Alfa-lfa Rhodegrass and Field carrot ; these germinated well, but were destroyed by insects and birds. Rain was scarce this year and this had a bad effect on the paddy. Jowar did exceedingly well on heavily manured plots.

In the garden we had different kinds of cabbages, radishes and ság ; spinach, brinjal, asparagus, tomato, turnips and onions. The digging of a well relieved the water scarcity to some extent.

The soil is gradually becoming fit for intensive cultivation. The flower garden has been a great success and we are able to raise most kinds of seed locally.

The Dairy.

This was started in the spring of 1923 with a two-fold object : the solving of the great problem, for W. Bengal and for much of India, of the discovery of a type of cow which will produce a plentiful supply of milk, and of a good working bullock ; and incidentally to supply the Institution itself (both Santiniketan and Sriniketan) with fresh milk. Such animals it is believed can be produced without the importation of foreign stock, by scientific breeding. The main difficulty is one of growing fodder as a field crop to replace the old free grazing. A small fodder storage pit (Silo) was laid down with excellent results.

The total strength of the Dairy was in January, 1923 : Milking cows

—8 ; Dry cows—3 ; Calves—12 ; Bull—1 ; Bullocks—5. A first class Montgomery bull was presented by H. E. the Governor. By borrowing the District Board bull from Suri, we benefited not only ourselves but the villagers as well.

From November 30th, 1922 to November 30th, 1923, over 255 mds. of milk was produced, without much equipment or any labour-saving device. We are in want of proper sheds, milk-room, food grinding and chopping implements, water and fodder supply. It will require at least Rs. 25,000/- more to equip our Dairy on economically profitable lines, of which Rs. 10,000/- has been promised (and partly paid) from Bombay.

Rinderpest broke out in the neighbourhood and carried away hundreds of cattle. Some of our herd were affected, but thanks to our precautionary measures no loss occurred. We helped also to save some of the neighbour's cattle.

P. C. Lal is now in charge.

Poultry.

Our experiment in poultry raising and egg production is only in its infancy. The pure bred white Leghorns have laid well and we have introduced ducks, turkeys, geese, guinea fowl, pigeons and rabits.

The incubators have worked well, but as yet we have no trained student who can attend to the proper raising of chickens.

It is proposed to send a student to be trained under the U. P. P. A. at Lucknow and on his return to develop the scope of this section, the success of which would mean a great deal to the neighbouring Musulman villages.

2. Cottage Industries.

The Tannery.

The deplorable condition of the local *muchi,* or hereditary village tanner, convinced us of the necessity of a study of his problem.

After a demonstration by the Government Research Tannery, we started a small chrome-tanning experiment without machinery. This had to be abandoned as only 20% of the local hides were found to be fit for the process. We have sent one of our students to be trained at the Research Tannery at Calcutta and on his return, with an expert muchi, we expect to be able to carry on bark-tanning and manufacture of leather articles both on educational and profitable lines.

Our immediate need is the equipment for a factory including a sewing machine, and in future we shall need buildings for factory and staff quarters.

Weaving.

This section was started in 1922 for research into the condition of the local weaving industry and for the teaching of improved methods and new patterns, as well as co-operative supply and sales.

Three improved looms were purchased and a shed erected after the last Pujas. The following work is being carried on: Cotton weaving; Silk weaving; Durree making; Calico printing; Woollen Rug weaving; Newar and Wick making; manufacture of Straw Mats and Carpets.

Local village boys are taking advantage of the training offered in dyeing with *deshi* dyes.

Co-operative Store.

A store was originally started for the convenience of the department but through the devoted work of Mani Roy the confidence of the villagers was quickly won by the good quality and fair measure given.

In spite of lack of adequate capital the charge of seed care and storage was taken on as well.

The store having now become financially independent it is henceforth to be run as a regular Co-operative Store, the capital being taken as a loan from the Institution, and the staff rendering their services.

The proposed *hát* near our premises will be a good stimulus and it is hoped that before long a chain of Co-operative Stores will be established in the neighbouring villages with this as the parent store.

3. Village Work.

Village Scouts.

We have now altogether seven scout troupes at the villages of Moadpur, Lohagarh, Metakona, Surul, Bhubandanga, Goalpara and Bolpur. Asit Chatterjee and Buddha Das were sent to be trained in the C. P. by Mr. J. Ross, D.C.C.

Gardening was introduced in some of the villages, the Moadpur garden proving the best. Maps of some of the villages were drawn up with the help of their respective scouts, showing dobas, tanks, pools, drains, etc. A complete statistical survey of some of the villages was undertaken.

The scouts rendered splendid service in the work of fighting malaria by filling dobas, destroying mosquito-breeding spots, opening drains, thereby reducing the percentage of attacks from 80% to 20% and 15%.

The sanitation and policing of the Mulluk mela were done by the scouts under the leadership of Dhirananda Roy, where they earned the sincere blessings of thousands of pilgrims amongst whom were a large number of helpless women. The scouts performed the same service in the Santiniketan Mela, where they also gave instructive demonstrations in Fire Brigade work.

Night Schools.

The Surul Night School has secured a grant of Rs. 5/- monthly from the District Board. It has some 30 pupils chiefly from amongst the depressed classes.

The Santalpara Night School is going on well, and has now a weaving class attached.

The Bhabandanga *Páthsálá* is also doing well.

Charitable Dispensary.

Miss G. Green in charge.

Between October, 1922 and October, 1923, 10330 patients were treated. During July, August and September the patients averaged 70 a day. The acquisition of a trained Midwife, graduate of a Baptist Hospital, with six year's experience, has been of immense value. She is an earnest worker and has done excellent service to the villagers.

Women come in from long distances to be treated and sometimes live on the premises for special treatment. We have had clinics in 3 villages and have visited patients in their own homes. Nearly 100 fever cases have been treated with medicine and care. The nurse has attended a number of cases of confinements. 18 patients have been sent to the Kalna, Calcutta and Burdwan hospitals, and their expenses paid.

Mrs. Dutt and her assistant Mrs. Mazumdar have rendered valuable service in teaching the girl's school attached to the dispensary which has now 29 pupils. There is a sewing class for the girls of Sriniketan and there are special afternoons for going out to teach the village women.

In January, 1923 the touring Exhibition in Child Welfare of the V. M. S. and Chelmsford League paid us a visit. The leading Zemindar

of Surul offered his hall, and Dr. Balfour came up from Delhi to lecture. Over 3000 villagers were conducted through the exhibition during the three days it lasted and special courses were held for local midwives, doctors, school masters and kavirajes, as well as for the Uttara-vibhaga girls. The exhibition was an unqualified success.

C. Visva-bharati Extension Institutions.

The Sammilani of Calcutta.

The Visva-bharati Sammilani which was started in Calcutta in 1922 successfully worked out an extension programme during the current year.

The spring term opened on the 15th February with a paper by Abanindranath Tagore followed by Music. On the 21st, Rabindranath Tagore gave readings from his own writings. On the 26th, L. K. Elmhirst exhibited a cinema film of Life in and around Sriniketan (the agricultural department). A new music play *Vasanta* was staged at the end of February, part of the proceeds of which was contributed to the North Bengal Flood Relief Fund. In March an Art Exhibition was held in the rooms of the Society of Oriental Art in which copies of the cave-paintings of Wagh were exhibited for the first time. Other lectures were by F. Benoit on Romain Rolland; Stella Kramrisch on the Reality of Indian Art ; Abanindranath Tagore on Nursery Rhymes in Bengal.

The Varshá (Monsoon) term began with an addres by Rabindranath Tagore. "Visarjan" was staged in August on four successive nights and highly appreciated. Other lectures were by C. F. Andrews on Indians Outside India ; and Saratchandra Chatterji on Bengali Literature. Rabindranath Tagore presided over a joint conference with the anti-malarial society on Kala-azar and also over the Rammohan Roy anniversary. Dr. Winternitz gave his lecture on the Mahabharata (published in this issue) on the eve of his departure from India.

During the winter term a social and literary club was started for the members of the Sammilani. Abanindranath Tagore spoke on Art ; Kshitimohan Sen on Mírabái; and Prof. Morgenstein on Life and Literature in Norway.

THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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